

THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

CONTAINING
FAMILIAR LETTERS

ON

The most common Occasions in Life.

ALSO

A Variety of elegant LETTERS for the Direction
and Embellishment of Style,

Hand of
BUSINESS, DUTY,
AMUSEMENT,
LOVE,

Hand of
COURTSHIP,
MARRIAGE,
FRIENDSHIP, and
Other Subjects.

WITH

Directions for writing LETTERS, and the
proper Forms of Address.

To which is added,

Forms of MESSAGE CARDS.

G Brock

L O N D O N :

Printed for B. LONG, and T. PRIDDEN.

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Lewis

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George May

P R E F A C E.

AS a great part of the intercourse of mankind has ever been transacted by letter, it is a just reflection upon any man, especially in this more refined age, not to be able to acquit himself handsomely in this respect. The occasions to do this are so very numerous, and the shame of doing it ill so great in low as well as in high life, that every endeavour to render them more perfect in this accomplishment, is, at least, entitled to a candid reception.

There have been many attempts towards a work of this sort; and though it were unkind to detract from the merit of such labours, yet we must observe, that those which have hitherto reached our notice fall very short of the end proposed. It would be a disagreeable task to single out the imperfections in other performances of this kind; therefore we shall only observe, that most of these are here supplied.

There is prefixed an Introduction, containing directions for inditing proper letters on most occasions, and the sentiments of several eminent authors on epistolary writing.

The chief branch of this design, and which indeed composes the main body of this Work, is a proper collection of letters, by eminent authors, upon subjects very various in their nature, and therefore not easily thrown under re-

gular classes. Business, duty, amusement, affection, courtship, friendship, and a multiplicity of other affairs that may require a letter, are here made the subject of ours; so that, on most occasions, no person can be at a loss for a pattern to direct him. And it is from this great variety of examples for style and manner, and other necessary directions, that we presume to call this performance by the name of *The Complete Letter-Writer*; such a number of letters being inserted as to answer the purpose almost of every individual, from the boy at school to the secretary of state. Nor let it offend the delicacy of any reader, that he will here meet with many epistles of the lower class. These could not be omitted without deviating from the grand point in view, namely, General Utility.

In the end are given a variety of Message Cards, designed for persons of every station.

RULES for READING, and particularly
of the EMPHASIS belonging to some
special word, or words, in a sentence.

IN order to read well, observe the following directions. 1. Take pains to acquire a perfect knowledge of the sounds of the letters in general. 2. Do not guess at a word at first sight, if you are not well acquainted with it, lest you get a habit of reading falsely. 3. Pronounce every word clear and distinctly. 4. Let the tone of your voice in reading be the same as in speaking. 5. Do not read in a hurry, for fear of learning to stammer. 6. Read so loud as to be heard by those about you, but not louder. 7. Observe your pauses well, and never make any where the sense will admit of none. 8. Humour your voice a little according to the subject. 9. Attend to those who read well, and endeavour to imitate their pronunciation. 10. Read often before good judges, and be thankful when they correct you. 11. Consider well the place of the *Emphasis* in a sentence, and pronounce it accordingly. By *Emphasis*, we mean the stress or force of voice that is laid on some particular word, or words, in a sentence, whereby the meaning and beauty of the whole may best appear: this, with respect to sentences, is the same as *Accent*, with regard to syllables.

The emphasis is generally placed upon the

accented syllable of a word; but if there be a particular opposition between two words in a sentence, whereby one differs from the other but in part, the accent is sometimes removed from its common place, as in the following instance: *The sun shines upon the júst and upon the únjust*, Here the stress of the voice is laid upon the first syllable in *unjust*, because it is opposed to *just* in the same sentence; but without such an opposition the accent would ly on its usual place, that is, on the last syllable; as *We must not imitate the unjust practices of others*.

The great and general rule how to know the emphatical word in a sentence is, *to consider the chief design of the whole*: but particular directions cannot be easily given; except, that when words are evidently opposed to one another in a sentence they are *emphatical*; and so is oftentimes the word which asks, a question, as *Who, What, When*, &c. but not always; for the emphasis must be varied according to the principal meaning of the speaker.

THE
INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING

Some general DIRECTIONS for writing
LETTERS, and how to address persons
of distinction in writing or discourse,
&c. &c.

EPISTOLARY writing, by which a great part of the commerce of human life is carried on, was esteemed by the Romans a liberal and polite accomplishment; and Cicero, the father of eloquence, and master of style, speaks with great pleasure, in his Epistles to Atticus, of his son's genius in this particular. Among them, it was undoubtedly a part of their education; and, in the opinion of Mr Locke, it well deserves a share in ours. ' The writing letters (says this great genius) enters ' so much into all the occasions of life, that no ' gentleman can avoid showing himself in compositions of this kind. Occurrences will daily force ' him to make this use of his pen; which lays open ' his breeding, his sense, and his abilities, to a severer examination than any oral discourse.

' It was a *quaint* difference (says Mr Howell, ' in one of his Epistles) that the Ancients made ' betwixt a *letter* and an *oration*; the one should ' be attired like a woman, and the other like a ' man. The *oration* is allowed large side-robcs, as

‘ long periods, parenthesis, similies, examples, and
‘ other parts of rhetorical flourishes ; but a letter
‘ should be short-coated, and closely couched. In
‘ short, we should write as we speak; and that’s a
‘ true familiar letter which expresseth our mean-
‘ ing the same as if we were discoursing with the
‘ party to whom we write, in succinct and easy
‘ terms. The tongue and pen are both interpre-
‘ ters of the mind ; but the pen the most faithful of
‘ the two; and as it has all the advantage of pre-
‘ meditation, it is not so apt to err, and leaves
‘ things behind on a more authentic as well as
‘ lasting record.’

When you sit down to write a letter, remember that this sort of writing should be like conversation. Observe this, and you will be no more at a loss to write than you will be to speak to the person were he present ; and this is nature without affectation, which, generally speaking, always pleases. As to subjects, you are allowed in writing letters the utmost liberty ; whatsoever has been done, or seen, or heard, or thought of, your own observations on what you know, your inquiries about what you do not know, the *time*, the *place*, the *weather*, every thing about you, stands ready for a subject; and the more variety you intermix, if not rudely thrown together, the better. Set discourses require a dignity or formality of style suitable to the subject ; whereas letter-writing rejects all pomp of words, and is most agreeable when most familiar. But, though lofty phrases are here improper, the style should not be low and mean ; and to avoid it, let an easy complaisance, an open sincerity, and unaffected good-nature, appear in all you say : for a fine letter does not consist in saying fine things, but

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II

in expressing ordinary ones with elegance and propriety; so as to please while it informs, and charm even in giving advice.

It should also wear an honest cheerful countenance, like one who truly esteems, and is glad to see his friend; and not like a fop, admiring his own dress, and seemingly pleased with nothing but himself.

Express your meaning as freely as possible. Long periods may please the ear, but they perplex the understanding; a short style and plain strikes the mind, and fixes an impression; a tedious one is seldom clearly understood, and never long remembered. But there is still something requisite beyond all this, towards the writing a polite and agreeable letter, and that is, an air of good-breeding and humanity, which ought constantly to appear in every expression, and that will give a beauty to the whole. By this I would not be supposed to mean overstrained or affected compliments, or any thing that way tending; but an easy, genteel, and obliging, manner of address, in a choice of words that bear the most civil meanings, with a thorough generous and good-natured disposition.

But in familiar letters of the common concerns of life elegance is not required, nor is it the thing we ought to aim at; for when attempted, the labour is often seen, and the end perverted by the very means. Ease and clearness are the only beauties we need to study.

Never be in pain about familiarity in the style to those with whom you are acquainted: for that very pain will make it awkward and stiff, in spite of all your endeavours to the contrary.

Write freely, but not hastily; let your words

drop from your pen as they would from your tongue when speaking deliberately on a subject of which you are master, and to a person with whom you are intimate.

Accustom yourself to think justly, and you will not be at a loss to write clearly ; for while there is confusion at the fountain-head, the brook will never be clear.

Before you *begin* to write, think what you are *going* to write. However unnecessary this caution may seem, I will venture to say, that ten appear ridiculous on paper through hurry and want of thought for one that is so thro' want of understanding.

A man that begins a speech before he is determined what to say, will undoubtedly find himself bewildered before he gets to the end ; not in sentiment only, but in grammar. To avoid this, before you begin a sentence, have the whole of it in your head, and make use of the first words that offer themselves to express your meaning ; for, be assured, they are the most natural, and will, generally speaking, (I can't say always), best answer your purpose ; for to stand searching after expressions breaks in upon the natural diction, and, for a word that, perhaps, is not a jot more expressive, you make the whole sentence stiff and awkward. But of all things learn to be correct, and never omit a careful perusal of what you have written, which whoever neglects, must have many inaccuracies ; and these are not only a reflection on the writer, but a rudeness to the person to whom they are written. Never be ashamed of having found something amiss, which you confess that you did, by amending it ; for in that confession you cancel

the fault, and if you have not time to transcribe it, let it pass: for a blot is by no means so bad as a blunder; and, by accustoming yourself to correct what is amiss, you will be less liable to future mistakes.

So much for letters in general; as for those in trade in particular, I shall quote a reputable author on the subject, who, I think, has said every thing that need to be said upon it, and given examples, whereby we cannot err if we do not excel, *viz.*

‘ As plainness, and a free way of expression, is
‘ the beauty and excellence of speech, so an easy
‘ concise way of writing is the best style for trades-
‘ men. He that affects a rumbling bombast style,
‘ and fills his letters with compliments and flour-
‘ ishes, makes a very ridiculous figure in trade:
‘ for instance of the following letter, which a
‘ young tradesman in the country writes up to a
‘ wholesale dealer in London, on his first setting
‘ up.’

“ SIR, The Destinies having so appointed it,
“ and my dark stars concurring, that I, who by
“ Nature was formed for better things, should be
“ put out to a trade; and the time of my servitude
“ being at length expired, I am now launched
“ forth into the great ocean of business; I thought
“ fit to acquaint you, that last month I received
“ my fortune, which, by my father’s will, had
“ been due two years past, at which time I arri-
“ ved to man’s estate, and became major; where-
“ upon I have taken a house in one of the princi-
“ pal streets of this town, where I am entered upon
“ my business, and hereby let you know that I
“ shall have occasion for the goods hereafter men-
“ tioned, which you may send to me by the carrier.”

This fine flourish, which the young shopkeeper dressed up with much application, and thought it well done, put his correspondent in London into a fit of laughing; who, instead of sending him directly the goods he wrote for, sent down into the country to enquire his character.

The same tradesman in London, by the next post, received the following letter from another young shopkeeper in the country, on his beginning business for himself.

“S I R, Being obliged, by my late master’s decease, to enter immediately upon business, and consequently open my shop without going to town to furnish myself with such goods as at present I want, I have sent you a small order, as under-written. I hope you will use me well, and let the goods be good of the sorts, though I cannot be in London to look them out myself. I have inclosed a bill of exchange of 75 l. on Mess. A— and B—, and company, payable to you, or to your order, at one-and-twenty days sight. Be pleased to get it accepted; and if the goods amount to more than that sum, I shall, when I have your bill of parcels, send you the remainder. I repeat my desire, that you will send me the goods well sorted and well chosen, and as cheap as possible, that I may be encouraged to a farther correspondence. I am your humble servant C. K.”

This was writing like a man that understood what he was doing, and such a letter could not want its proper effect upon such a correspondent in London.

In short, a tradesman’s letter should be plain and concise, and to the purpose; no quaint expressions,

no book-phrases, no flourishes; and yet they must be full and sufficient to express what he means, so as not to be doubtful, much less unintelligible. I can by no means approve of studied abbreviations, and leaving out the needful copulatives of speech in trading letters; they are affected to the last degree: for, in a word, 'tis affecting to be thought a man of more than ordinary sense, by writing extraordinary nonsense, affecting to be a man of business, by giving orders, and expressing your meaning in terms which a man of business may not think himself bound by.

When a tradesman takes an apprentice, the first thing he does for him, after he lets him into the counting-house and his books, and after trusting him with his more private business, is to let him write letters to his dealers, and correspond with his friends; and this he does in his master's name, subscribing his letter thus: "I am,

" For my master, A. B. and company,

" Your humble servant,

C. D."

And beginning thus:

" SIR, I am ordered by my master, A. B. to
" advise you, that"——

Or thus:

" SIR, These are, by my master's order, to
" give you notice"——

Orders for goods ought to be very explicit and particular, that the dealer may not mistake; especially if it be orders from a tradesman to a manu-

facturer to make or buy goods, either of such a quality or pattern; in which case, if the goods are made to the colours, and of a marketable goodness, and within the time limited, the person ordering them cannot refuse to receive them, and to make himself debtor to the maker. On the contrary, if the goods are not of a marketable goodness, or not to the patterns, or not sent within the time, the maker ought not to expect they should be received.

In regard to the form and superscription of letters, especially of the politer sort, it may be necessary to observe,

That when you write to a person of distinction, or gentleman, let it be on gilt paper; and without sealing the letter itself, inclose it in a cover, which you are to seal over it, and write the superscription thereon.

Begin your letter about two inches below the top of your paper, and leave about an inch margin on the left hand; and what compliments, or services, you send in the letter, insert them rather in the body or conclusion of it than by way of postscript, as is too often done, but is neither so affectionate or polite; for it not only savours of levity to your friends, but has the appearance of your having almost forgot them.

It is usual among the polite to sign their names at a considerable distance below the conclusion of the letter, and thereby leave a large vacant space over their names; which, though customary, I would by all means advise you to avoid; because 'tis putting it in the power of any one who has your letter to write what he pleases over your

name, and to make you in all appearance have signed a writing that you would by no means have set your hand to.

In directing your letter to persons who are well known, 'tis best not to be too particular; because 'tis lessening the person you direct to, by supposing him to be obscure, and not easily found.

Whenever you direct to persons who are honourable, either by family or office, 'tis more proper, as well as polite, to direct without the title of Esq. than with it; for instance,

To the Honourable Mr Arundel; not, To the Honourable Peter Arundel, Esq. which would be ridiculous.

SOME FARTHER

DIRECTIONS and OBSERVATIONS

ON

EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

1. **W**HEN you are writing to your superior, be not prolix, but let your letter be as short as the subject, or occasion, you write on will permit ; especially such wherein favours are requested : and be particularly careful in not omitting any letter belonging to the words you write, as *I've*, *can't*, *don't*, *shou'd*, *wou'd*, &c. instead of *I have*, *cannot*, *do not*, *should*, *would*, &c. ; for such contractions not only appear disrespectful, and too familiar, but discover (those almost inseparable companions) ignorance and impudence. Neither be over pompous in your style ; but convey your thoughts with ease and perspicuity, that they may appear as from nature, rather than a vain conceit to show your learning ; the former shows your humility, the latter your pride.

2. When you write to your superiors, never make a postscript, and (if possible) avoid it in letters to your equals ; especially complimentary postscripts to any of the person's family or relations to whom you write ; as it shows disrespect in your neglecting such persons in the body of your letter ; wherefore, it is best to keep up to form if you write to the ancient, the grave, or the proud ; such per-

sons being most commonly jealous of disrespect, and expect to be treated with deference.

3. When you write to your inferiors, you are at liberty to act as you think proper as to the last caution; and take care that you are not too familiar or free in your style, lest it should make you contemptible; always having the proverb in your mind, *viz.* "Too much familiarity commonly breeds contempt."

4. If your letter consists of several paragraphs, begin every fresh or new one at the same distance from the left-hand margin of the paper as when you began the subject of your letter; always remembering, as you write on, to make your proper stops, otherwise no person will be able to come at the sense or meaning of your letter; which neglect very often causes mistakes and misunderstandings: and be careful to put a period or full stop at the end of every paragraph, thus.

5. When the subject of your letter is finished, conclude it with the same address as at first, as, *Sir; Madam; or, May it please your Grace; Lordship; Ladyship, &c. &c.* and always subscribe your name in a larger hand than the body part of your letter.

6. Letters should be wrote on *Quarto* fine gilt post paper to superiors; if to your equals or inferiors, you are at your own option to use what sort or size you please, but take care never to seal your letter with a wafer unless to the latter.

7. When your letter is sealed, you must write the superscription (if it be to your superior or equal) in the following manner, *viz.* Write the word *To* by itself, as nigh the left hand upper angle or corner of your letter as is convenient: then

begin the title, or name, of the person about an inch lower, and almost in the middle or centre of it, according to the length of the person's name, or title ; and write the place of his abode in a line by itself at the bottom, in a larger character than the other part, thus :

To

The Right Hon. the
Earl of PEMBROKE,
At WILTON-HOUSE,
WILTSHIRE.

Proper DIRECTIONS, for addressing persons of every rank or denomination, at the beginnings of letters, and the superscriptions.

Beginnings of Letters.

To the KING. *Sire*; or, *Sir*; or, *Most Gracious Sovereign*; or, *May it please Your MAJESTY*.

To the QUEEN. *Madam*; or, *Most*, &c.

To the PRINCE OF WALES. *Sir*; or, *May it please Your Royal Highness*.

To the PRINCESS OF WALES. *Madam*; or, *May it please Your Royal Highness*.

To the PRINCESS DOWAGER. Ditto.

Note. All *Sovereigns'* sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, are entitled to *Royal Highness*.

And to the rest of the Royal family. *Highness*.

To a DUKE. *May it please your Grace*.

To a DUCHESS. Ditto.

To a MARQUIS, EARL, } *My Lord*; or, *May it*
VISCOUNT, LORD, } *please your Lordship*.

To a Marchioness, an Earl's wife, } *May it please*
Viscountess, or a Lord's wife, } *your Ladyship*.

To the Archbishops. *May it please your Grace*; or, *My Lord*.

To the rest of the Bishops. *My Lord*; or, *May it please your Lordship*.

To the rest of the Clergy. *Reverend Sir*.

Note. All younger sons of a *Duke* or *Marquis* are styled *My Lord*; and *Earls*, *Viscounts*, and *Lords'* sons, are styled *Honourable*, and *Esquires*.

To either of these, *Sir*; *Honoured Sir*; or, *May it please your Honour*.

Also the title of *Lady* is given to the daughters of *Dukes, Marquisses, and Earls, Madam*; or, *May it please your Ladyship.*

To a Member of Parliament. *May it please your Honour.*

To the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London. *My Lord*; or, *May it please your Lordship.*

Note. That *Generals, Admirals, and Colonels,* and all *field officers,* are *Honourable.*

All other officers, either in the *army* or *navy,* have only the title of the commission they bear set first on the superscription of the letters; and at the beginning, *Sir*; or, *Honoured Sir*; or, *May it please your Honour.*

An *Ambassador,* *May it please your Excellency*; or, *Sir.*

All *Privy Counsellors,* and *Judges* that are *Privy Counsellors,* are *Right Honourable*; and the whole *Privy Council* taken together are styled *Most Honourable.*

Baronets are *Honourable.*

Justices of the Peace, and *Mayors,* are styled *Right Worshipful.*

Likewise *Sheriffs* of counties, &c.

All *Governors* under His Majesty are styled *Excellency.*

Superscriptions of Letters.

To His Most Sacred MAJESTY; or, *To the KING's Most Excellent MAJESTY.*

To Her Most Sacred MAJESTY; or, *QUEEN's Most Excellent MAJESTY.*

To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

To Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

To Her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager of Wales.

Sovereigns' sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters.

To His or Her Royal Highness.

To the rest of the Royal family. Highness.

To his Grace the Duke of K——n.

To her Grace the Duchess of N——k.

To a Marquis, Earl, Viscount, Lord, { *To the Right Honourable the Marquis of; Earl of; Lord Viscount F——h; the Lord H——w.*

To a Marchioness. *To the Right Honourable the Marchioness of, &c.* An Earl or Viscount's wife. *To the Right Honourable the Countess of; the Viscountess of, &c.* To a Lord's wife. *To the Right Honourable the Lady, &c.*

To the daughter of a Duke, Marquis, and Earl, *To the Right Honourable the Lady Anne F——h.*

Note. The wives of Lieutenant-generals, Major-generals, and Brigadier-generals, are *Honourable*.

Also, the wives of Vice and Rear Admirals, Ambassadors, &c. *To the Right Honourable Mrs——.*

To an Archbishop. *To his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.*

To other Bishops. *To the Right Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Bishop of, &c.*

Some necessary orthographical directions for writing correctly; and when to use capital letters, and when not.

1. **L**ET the first word of every book, epistle, note, bill, verse, (whether it be in prose, rhyme, or blank verse), begin with a capital.

2. Let proper names of persons, places, ships, rivers, mountains, things personified, &c. begin with a capital: also, all appellative names of professions, callings, &c.

3. It was formerly understood ornamental to begin every substantive in a sentence with a capital, if it bore some considerable stress of the author's sense upon it, to make it the more remarkable and conspicuous: but now, the common practice is to begin all common substantives with a little letter; which adds to the beauty of writing and printing.

4. None but substantives, whether common, proper, or personal, may begin with a capital, except in the beginning, or immediately after a full stop.

5. Qualities, affirmations, or participles, must not begin with a capital, unless such words begin, or come immediately after, a period; then they never fail to begin with a capital.

6. If any notable saying or passage of an author be quoted in his own words, it begins with a capital, though not immediately after a period.

7. Let not a capital be written in the middle of a word among small letters.

8. Where capitals are used in whole words or sentences, something is expressed extraordinary great. They are also used in titles of books, for ornament's sake.

9. The pronoun *I*, and the exclamative *O*, must be written with a capital.

10. The letter *q* is never used without the letter *u* next following.

11. The long *f* must never be inserted immediately after the short *s*, nor at the end of a word.

THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART I.

Miscellaneous LETTERS on the most useful
and common occasions.

LETTER I.

*From a brother at home to a sister abroad on a visit,
complaining of her not writing.*

Dear Sister,

I MUST acquaint you how unkind it is taken by every body here, that we so seldom hear from you: my mother, in particular, is not a little displeased, and says you are a very idle girl; my aunt is of the same opinion; and none but myself endeavours to find excuses for you; but I beg you will give me that trouble no more, and, for the future, take care to deserve no rebuke, which you may easily do, by writing soon and often. You are very sensible how dear you are to us all; think then with yourself, whether it be right to omit giving us the only satisfaction that absence affords to real friends, which is often to hear from one another.

Our best respects to Mr and Mrs Herbert, and compliments to all friends.

From your very affectionate brother, T. C.

D

LETTER II.

The sister's answer.

Dear Brother,

I WILL not set about finding excuses, but own my fault, and thank you for your kind reproof; and, in return, I promise you never to be guilty of the like again. I write this immediately on the receipt of your's, to beg my mamma's pardon, which you, I know, can procure; as also my aunt's, on this my promise of amendment. I hope you will continue to excuse all my little omissions; and be assured, I am never so forgetful of myself as to neglect my duty designedly. I shall certainly write to mamma by next post; this is just going, which obliges me to conclude with my duty to dear mamma, and sincere respects to all friends.

Your ever affectionate sister,

M. C.

LETTER III.

A young gentleman's letter to his papa, written by a schoolfellow.

Dear Papa,

ACCORDING to your commands, when you left me at school, I hereby obey them; and not only inform you that I am well, but also that I am happy in being placed under the tuition of so good a master, who is the best-natured man in the world; and, I am sure, was I inclinable to be an idle boy, his goodness to me would prompt me to be diligent at my study, that I might please

him. Besides, I see a great difference made between those that are idle and those that are diligent : idle boys being punished as they deserve, and diligent boys being encouraged : but you know, Papa, that I always loved my book ; for you have often told me, if I intended ever to be a great man I must learn to be a good scholar, lest, when I am grown up, I should be a laughing-stock or make-game to others for my ignorance : but I am resolved to be a scholar.

Pray give my duty to my mamma, and my love to my sister.

I am, dear Papa,

Your most dutiful son.

LETTER IV.

Another on the same subject.

Dear Papa,

AS I know you will be glad to hear from your little boy, I should be very naughty if I did not acquaint you that I am in good health, and that I am very well pleased with my master ; for he is very kind to me, and tells me, that he will always love young gentlemen that mind their learning : therefore, I am sure, he will still love me ; because you have told me, that boys who do not mind their learning will never become gentlemen, and will be laughed at for their ignorance, though they have ever so much money ; and as I am sure you always speak truth, and I would willingly be a gentleman like you, I am resolved to be a good scholar, which I know will be a pleasure to you and my mamma, and gain me the love of every body.

Pray give my duty to my mamma, my uncle,
and my aunt, and my love to my sister and cousins.

I am, dear Papa,

Your most dutiful son,

LETTER V.

To a friend against waste of time.

Dear Sir,

CONVERSE often with yourself, and neither
lavish your time, nor suffer others to rob you of
it. Many of our hours are stolen from us, and others
pass insensibly away ; but of both these losses, the
most shameful is that which happens through our
own neglect. If we take the trouble to observe,
we shall find that one considerable part of our life
is spent in doing evil, and the other in doing no-
thing, or in doing what we should not do. We
don't seem to know the value of time, nor how
precious a day is ; nor do we consider, that every
moment brings us nearer to our end. Reflect upon
this, I entreat you, and keep a strict account of
time. Procrastination is the most dangerous thing
in life. Nothing is properly ours but the instant
we breathe in, and all the rest is nothing ; it is the
only good we possess ; but then it is fleeting, and
the first comer robs us of it. Men are so weak,
that they think they oblige by giving of trifles, and
yet reckon that time as nothing, for which the most
grateful person in the world can never make
amends.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

In answer to a friend.

SIR,

TO tell you, in answer to your's, what I think of prosperity, is, that I take it to be more dangerous to our virtue than adversity. It is apt to make us vain and insolent; regardless of others, and forgetful of God, ambitious in our pursuits, and intemperate in our enjoyments. Thus it proved to the wisest man on earth, I mean Solomon. But I much admire what you say of silence, and wish I could practise that passive virtue, which is the first step of wisdom, the nurse of peace, and the guardian of virtue. Words do but ruffle and discompose the mind, betraying the soul to a thousand vanities. I hope you will in our next meeting find me greatly improved in what you so much recommended to me.

I remain, Sir, your's, &c.

LETTER VII.

To a young gentleman.

SIR,

I DARE venture to affirm, that learning, properly cultivated and applied, is what truly makes the gentleman, and that a wise man is as much superior to an ignorant person as a man is above the level of a brute. Wherefore, you cannot do better than to apply yourself seriously to the cultivation of your mind; to which purpose nothing will contribute more than your prescribing yourself a regular method of study. The morning is

undoubtedly more proper for reading than any other part of the day, because the mind is then free and disengaged, and unclouded by those vapours which we generally find after a full meal. Nevertheless, I would not affect to read over a multitude of volumes, nor read with greediness; I would rather chuse to read a little, and digest it. Neither would I regard the number so much as the choice of my books, &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

From a young lady, in answer to a letter she had received from her mamma, advising her to persevere in the Christian duties she had been instructed in.

Most honoured Madam,

I AM at a loss for words to express the joy I felt at the receipt of your letter, wherein you are pleased to acquaint me, that nothing ever gave my dear mamma greater pleasure and satisfaction than the account I have given her of the conduct I observe in my spiritual affairs; and that I may still add to that comfort (which shall ever be my study), when an opportunity offers itself, I presume to continue the information.

When I have properly discharged my duty to that Divine Being to whom I am indebted for my existence, I repair to my toilette; but not with an intent to clothe my body (which I know must, sooner or later, fall into corruption) with vain attire, but with such as is decent and innocent; regarding fine robes as the badge of pride and vanity; keeping those enemies, to our sex in particular, at too great a distance ever to dare an attempt upon my mind.

When public prayers and breakfast are over, I apply my thoughts to the duties of the school; and divide the time appointed for them, as equally as possibly I can, between the several branches of education I am engaged in, both before and after dinner.

When school is finished for the day, I, accompanied by a young lady, who is my bedfellow, and of a like disposition, retire to our room, where we improve ourselves by reading. Books of piety are our most common choice. These warm our wills, and enlighten our understandings: they instruct us in the cause of our misconduct, and prescribe to us a remedy; they neither flatter a dignified title, nor insult the peasant who tills the ground; but, like painted bustos, look upon every one alike. In fine, they refresh the memory, enlarge the understanding, and enflame the will; and, in a delightful manner, cultivate both virtue and wisdom.

Having finished our reading, either of piety or history, which we prefer next, (especially such as relates to our own country), and supper and prayers are over, I retire alone to my room, to take an impartial view of the actions of the day. If my conscience does not accuse me of having committed any thing criminal, I give glory to God; and, with bended knees, and an humble heart, return him unfeigned thanks for protecting me against those temptations which the enemy to mankind is ready to allure us with: for, I am persuaded, it was not my strength of virtue that withstood the temptations, but his assisting grace that enabled me to overcome them; and if I am conscious of having done amiss, I sue for pardon, and lay not my body to rest till I have procured peace to my soul.

If at any time I am permitted to pay a visit, (which liberty your indulgence has allowed), I take care to time it properly; for there are certain times when visits become rather troublesome than friendly: wherefore, I avoid it when much company is expected; or when I am certain that family affairs will not admit of sufficient leisure to receive them: the former on my own account, the latter on my friends: that is, much company assembled together serves rather to confuse our ideas than enliven them. Wherefore, when I am so unfortunate to ill time a visit, I withdraw as soon as civility and ceremony will permit me; for, in my weak opinion, Madam, long conversations grow dull, as few of our sex are furnished with a sufficient fund of materials for long discourses, unless it be to comment upon the frailties of the absent, and turn their misfortunes into a subject for our most cruel diversion.

This, Madam, is a vice you have often cautioned me against, and I shall be particularly careful to avoid it; being both an unchristian and disingenuous principle, to feast ourselves at another's expense.

This is all I have to offer at present; and am, with great humility,

Most honoured Madam,

Your most dutiful daughter.

LETTER IX.

From a young lady to her mamma, requesting a favour.

Dear Mamma,

THE many instances you have given me of your affection leave me no room to believe that the

favour I presume to ask will be displeasing. Was I in the least doubtful of it, I hope my dear mamma has too good an opinion of my conduct to imagine I would ever advance anything that might give her the least dissatisfaction.

The holidays are nigh at hand, when all of us young ladies are to pay our several personal respects and duties to our parents, except one; whose friends (her parents being dead) reside at too great a distance for her to expect their indulgence in sending for her: besides, were they to do so, the expense attending her journey would be placed to her account, and deducted out of the small fortune left her by her parents.

This young lady's affability, sense, and good nature, have gained her the friendship and esteem of the whole school; each of us contending to render her retirement (as I may justly call it) from her native home and friends as comfortable and agreeable as we possibly can.

How happy should I think myself above the rest of our young ladies, if you will give me leave to engage her to spend the holidays with me at home! And I doubt not but her address and behaviour will attract your esteem, among the rest of those she has already acquired.

Your compliance with this request will greatly add to the happiness I already enjoy from the repeated indulgencies and favours conferred on her, who will always persevere to merit the continuance of them. I am, with my duty to papa,

Dear Mamma,

Your most dutiful daughter.

LETTER X.

*From a young gentleman to his papa, desiring that
he may learn to dance.*

Dear Papa,

YOUR affectionate and paternal behaviour convinces me, that you are absolutely resolved to spare no cost in any branch of education that is essentially necessary in the employment you propose I shall hereafter follow: and though I am certain you intend that dancing shall have its share in my studies, nevertheless, permit me to put you in mind of it, and also to desire you will no longer, on account of the strength of my limbs, (which I am sensible is the motive that retards me from beginning), delay your orders to my master; for I am persuaded, from an instance I am witness of in our school, of a young master, who is much weaker in his limbs than ever I was, that dancing will rather strengthen than weaken my joints.

It is not my emulation for dancing a minuet that is the motive that induces me to be thus pressing; for I presume there are other things more necessary belonging to this qualification than that; such as to walk well; to make a bow; how to come properly into a room, and to go out of it; how to salute a friend or acquaintance in the street, whether a superior, equal, or inferior; and several other points of behaviour, which are more essential than dancing a minuet.

These points of behaviour I often blush to be ignorant of; and have several times been the ridicule of those young chaps who are advanced in

the knowledge of this accomplishment: and as I am persuaded you would not chuse I should be a make-game to any of my schoolfellows, I doubt not but you will send your immediate orders for my beginning; which favour, added to the many others you have already conferred, will greatly oblige,

Dear Papa, Your most dutiful son.

LETTER XI.

From a young lady to her papa, who lately embarked for the East Indies, in the Company's service, but was detained at Portsmouth by contrary winds.

Dear Papa,

I FLATTER myself you are too well convinced of my steady adherence to my duty and affection, ever to imagine I will omit the least opportunity that offers to pay you my most humble duty.

I beg my dear papa may not be offended, if I say, that it gives me a secret satisfaction to hear you are still within the reach of a post letter: and though I cannot have the pleasure of a paternal embrace, yet I rejoice in the expectation of receiving the wished-for account of your health's continuance; which to me, my dear mamma, and brother, is the greatest blessing that Providence can possibly bestow upon us.

Oh! Sir, though short to some, the interval of time since I received your blessing, ere your departure from us, to me seems an age! And when I reflect how many such I am doomed to bear in the absence of the best of parents, I am in con sol able! And if it were possible that nature could subsist on

sleep alone, I could with pleasure renounce every amusement whatever, and make the silent pillow my retreat.

Oh ! may the Divine Being be your protector against the many dangers of that boisterous element you are obliged to traverse ! May he direct such gentle and favourable breezes that may conduct you to your destined port ! May he add to this a happy and successful voyage ! and, to crown all my wishes, grant you a speedy and safe return !

I have nothing worth notice to advise you of, but that we are all (God be praised !) in the same good health you left us, and are in great expectation of the same comfortable account in your answer to this, from, dear Papa,

Your most dutiful daughter.

L E T T E R XII.

From a young woman, just gone to service, to her mother at home.

Dear Mother,

'TIS a fortnight this very day that I have been at Mr Johnson's ; and, I thank God, I begin to find myself a little easier than I have been : but, indeed, I have suffered a great deal since I parted from you and all the rest of our friends. At our first coming hither, I thought every thing looked so strange about me ; and when John got upon his horse, and rode out of the yard, methought every thing looked stranger and stranger ; so I got up to the window and looked after him, till he turned into the London road, (for you know we live a quarter of a mile on the farther side of it),

and then I sat down and cried, and that always gives me some relief. Many a time have I cried since; but I do my best to dry up my tears, and to appear as cheerful as I can.

Dearest mother, I return you a thousand thanks for all the kind advice you were so good as to give me at parting; and I think it over often and often. But yet, methinks, it would be better if I had it in writing; that would be what I would value above all things; but I am afraid to ask for what would give you so much trouble. So, with my duty to you and my father, and kind love to all friends, I remain ever,

Your most dutiful daughter.

LETTER XIII.

Her mother's answer.

My dear Child,

I AM very sorry that you have suffered so much since we parted: but it is always so at first, and will wear away in time. I have had my share too, but I bear it now pretty well; and hope you will endeavour to follow my example in this, as you used to say you loved to do in every thing. You must consider, that we never should have parted with you, had it not been for your good. If you continue virtuous and obliging, all the family will love and esteem you. You will get new friends there; and I think I can assure you, that you will lose no love here: for we all talk of you every evening; and every body speaks of you as fondly, or rather more fondly than ever they did. In the mean time, keep yourself employed as much as you can, which is the best way of wearing off any concern. Do

all the business of your place; and be always ready to assist your fellow-servants, where you can, in their business. This will both fill up your time, and help to endear you to them: and then you will soon have as many friends about you there as you used to have here. I don't caution you against speaking ill of any body living, for I know you never used to do it: but if you hear a bad story of any body, try to soften it all you can; and never tell it again, but rather let it slip out of your mind as soon as possible. I am in great hopes that all the family are kind to you already, from the good character I have heard of them; but I should be glad to see it confirmed by your next, and the more particular you are in it the better. If you have any time to spare from your business, I hope you will give a good share of it to your devotions; that is an exercise which gives comfort and spirits without tiring one. My prayers you have daily, I might have said hourly: and there is nothing that I pray for with more earnestness, than that my dearest child may do well. You did not mention any thing of your health in your last; but I had the pleasure of hearing you was well, by Mr Cooper's young man, who said he called upon you in his way from London, and that you looked as fresh as a rose, and as bonny as a blackbird.—You know James's way of talking. However, I was glad to hear you was well, and desire you would not forget to mention your health yourself in your next letter. Your father desires his blessing, and your brothers their kind love, to you. Heaven bless you, my dear child! and continue you to be a comfort to us all, and more particularly to

Your affectionate mother.

LETTER XIV.

The daughter to the mother.

Dear Mother,

THOUGH we begin to have such cold weather, I am got up into my chamber to write to you. God be thanked I am grown almost quite easy; which is owing to my following your good advice, and the kindness that is already shown me in the family. Betty and I are bedfellows; and she, and Robin, and Thomas, are all so kind to me, that I can scarcely say which is the kindest. My master is sixty-five years of age next April; but by his looks you would hardly take him to be fifty. He has always an easy smiling countenance, and he is very good to all his servants. When he has happened to pass by me, as I have been dusting out the chambers, or in the passage, he generally says something to encourage me, and that makes one's work go on more pleasantly. My mistress is as thin as my master is plump: not much short of him in age, and more apt to be a little peevish. Indeed that may easily be borne; for I have never heard my master say a single word of any of us but what was kind and encouraging. My master, they say, is vastly rich; for he is a prudent man, and laid up a great deal of money while he was in business, with which he purchased his estate here, and another in Suffex, sometime before he left off. And they have, I find, a very good house in London as well as this here; but my master and mistress both love the country best, and so they sometimes stay here for a whole winter, and all

the summer constantly ; of which I am very glad, because I am so much the nearer you : and I have heard so much of the wickedness of London, that I don't at all desire to go there. As to my fellow-servants, it is thought that Betty (who is very good-natured, and as merry as the day is long) is to be married to the jovial landlord over the way ; and to say the truth, I am apt to believe that they are actually promised to one another. Our coachman, Thomas, seems to be a very good worthy man ; you may see by his eyes, that it does his heart good whenever he can do a kind thing for any of the neighbours. He was born in the parish, and his father has a good farm of his own in it, and rents another. Robin, the footman, is good-natured too ; he is always merry, and loves to laugh as much as he loves to eat ; and I'm sure he has a good stomach. But I need not talk of that, for now mine is come again ; I eat almost as hearty as he does. With such fellow-servants, and such a master, I think it would be my own fault if I am not happy. Well in health I assure you I am, and begin to be pretty well in spirits ; only my heart will heave a little still every time I look towards the road that goes to your house. Heaven blefs you all there ! and make me a deserving daughter of so good a mother !

L E T T E R X V .

The mother's answer and advice.

Dear Child,

THE next piece of advice that I gave you was,
 " To think often how much a life of virtue is

to be preferred to a life of pleasure; and how much better, and more lasting, a good name is than beauty."

If we call things by their right names, there is nothing that deserves the name of pleasure so truly as virtue: but one must talk as people are used to talk; and I think, by a life of pleasure, they generally mean a life of gaiety.

Now, our gaieties, God knows, are at best very trifling, always unsatisfactory, often attended with difficulties in the procuring them, and fatigue in the very enjoyment, and too often followed by regret and self-condemnation. What they call a life of pleasure among the great must be a very laborious life: they spend the greatest part of the night in balls and assemblies, and sling away the greatest part of their days in sleep: their life is too much opposed to nature to be capable of happiness: 'tis all a hurry of visits, twenty or thirty perhaps in a day, to persons of whom there are not above two or three that they have any real friendship or esteem for, (supposing them to be capable of either:) a perpetual seeking after what they call diversions; an insipidity, and want of taste, when they are engaged in them, and a certain languishing and restlessness when they are without them. This is not living, but a constant endeavour to cheat themselves out of the little time they have to live; for they generally inherit a bad constitution, make it worse by their absurd way of life, and deliver a still weaker and weaker thread down to their children. I don't know any one thing more ridiculous than the seeing their wrinkled fallow faces all set off with diamonds. Poor mistaken gentlewomen! they should endeavour to avoid

people's eyes as much as possible, and not to attract them; for they are really a quite deplorable sight, and their very faces are a standing lesson against the strange lives they lead.

People in a lower life, it is true, do not act so ridiculously as those in a higher; but even among them too, there is a vast difference between the people that live well and the people that live ill: the former are more healthy, in better spirits, fitter for business, and more attentive to it; the latter are more negligent, more uneasy, more contemptible, and more diseased.

In truth, either in high or low life, virtue is only another name for happiness, and debauchery is the high road to misery; and this, to me, appears just as true and evident as that moderation is always good for us, and excess always hurtful.

But is it not a charming thing to have youth and beauty,——to be followed and admired,——to have presents offered from all sides to one,——to be invited to all diversions, and to be distinguished by the men from all the rest of the company!——Yes, my dear child. All this would be charming, if we had nothing to do but to dance, and receive presents, and if this distinction of you was to last always. But the mischief of it is, that these things cannot be enjoyed without increasing your vanity every time you enjoy them, and swelling up a passion in you that must soon be balked and disappointed. How long is this beauty to last? There are but few faces that can keep it to the other side of five-and-twenty; and how would you bear it, after having been used to be thus distinguished and admired for some time, to sink out of the notice of people, and to be neglected, and,

perhaps, affronted, by the very persons who used to pay the greatest adoration to you?

Do you remember the gentleman that was with us last autumn, and his presenting you with that pretty flower one day, on his coming out of the garden? I don't know whether you understood him or not; but I could read it in his looks, that he meant it for a lesson to you. It is true, the flower was quite a pretty one; but though you put it in water, you know it faded, and grew disagreeable, in four or five days; and had it not been cropped, but suffered to grow on in the garden, it would have done the same in nine or ten. Now, a year is to beauty what a day was to that flower; and who would value themselves much on the possession of a thing which they are sure to lose in so short a time?

Nine or ten years are what one may call the natural term of life for beauty in a young woman; but by accidents, or misbehaviour, it may die long before its time. The greater part of what people call beauty in your face, for instance, is owing to that air of innocence and modesty that is in it; if once you should suffer yourself to be ruined by any base man, all that would soon vanish, and assurance and ugliness would come in the room of it.

And if other bad consequences should follow, (for other bad ones there are, of more sorts than one), you would lose your bloom too, and then all is gone! but keep your reputation as you have hitherto kept it, and that will be a beauty which will last to the end of your days; for it will be only the more confirmed and brightened by time; that will secure you esteem when all the present form of your face is vanished away, and will be

always mellowing into greater and greater charms. These my sentiments you'll take as a blessing, and remember, they come from the heart of a tender and affectionate mother. E. C.

LETTER XVI.

A son's letter, at school, to his father.

Honoured Sir,

I AM greatly obliged to you for all your favours; all I have to hope is, that the progress I make in my learning will be no disagreeable return for the same. Gratitude, duty, and a view of future advantages, all contribute to make me thoroughly sensible how much I ought to labour for my own improvement and your satisfaction, and to show myself upon all occasions,

Your most obedient and ever dutiful son,

ROBERT MOLESWORTH.

LETTER XVII.

A letter of excuse to a father or mother.

Honoured Sir, or, Madam,

I AM informed, and it gives me great concern, that you have heard an ill report of me, which I suppose was raised by some of my schoolfellows, who either envy my esteem, or, by aggravating my faults, would endeavour to lessen their own; though I must own I have been a little too remiss in my school business, and am now sensible I have lost in some measure my time and credit thereby; but, by my future diligence, I hope to recover

both, and to convince you that I pay a strict regard to all your commands, which I am bound to, as well in gratitude as duty : and hope I shall ever have leave, and with great truth, to subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful son,
PHILIP COLLINGS.

LETTER XVIII.

To Mr —

Tunbridge.

I THINK I promised you a letter from this place ; yet I have nothing more material to write than that I got safe hither. To any other man I should make an apology for troubling you with an information so trivial ; but among true friends there is nothing indifferent ; and what would seem of no consequence to others, has, in intercourses of this nature, its weight and value. A bystander, unacquainted with play, may fancy, perhaps, that the counters are of no more worth than they appear ; but those who are engaged in the game know they are to be considered at a higher rate. You see I draw my allusions from the scene before me ; a propriety which the critics, I think, upon some occasions, recommend. I have often wondered what odd whim could first induce the healthy to follow the sick into places of this sort, and lay the scene of their diversions amidst the most wretched part of our species. One should imagine an hospital the last spot in the world to which those in pursuit of pleasure would think of resorting. However, so it is ; and, by this means,

the company here furnish out a tragi-comedy of the most singular kind. While some are literally dying, others are expiring in metaphor; and in one scene you are presented with the real, and in another with the fantastical, pains of mankind. An ignorant spectator might be apt to suspect that each part was endeavouring to qualify itself for acting in the opposite character: for the infirm cannot labour more earnestly to recover the strength they have lost than the robust to destroy that which they possess. Thus the diseased pass not more anxious nights in their beds than the healthy at the hazard tables; and I frequently see a game at quadrille occasion as severe disquietudes as a fit of the gout. As for myself, I perform a sort of middle part in this motley drama, and am sometimes disposed to join with the invalids in envying the healthy, and sometimes have spirits enough to mix with the gay in pitying the splenetic.

The truth is, I have found some benefit by the waters; but I shall not be so sanguine as to pronounce with certainty of their effects till I see how they enable me to pass through the approaching winter. That season, you know, is the time of trial with me; and if I get over the next with more ease than the last, I shall think myself obliged to celebrate the nymph of these springs in grateful sonnets.

But let time and seasons operate as they may, there is one part of me over which they will have no power; and in all the changes of this uncertain constitution my heart will ever continue fixed and firmly your's.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

From a young apprentice to his father, to let him know how he likes his place, and goes on.

Honoured Sir,

I KNOW it will be a great satisfaction to you, and my dear mother, to hear that I go on very happily in my business; and my master, seeing my diligence, puts me forward, and encourages me in such a manner, that I have great delight in it: and hope I shall answer, in time, your good wishes and expectations, and the indulgence you have always shown me. There is such good order in the family, as well on my mistress's part as my master's, that every servant as well as I knows his duty, and does it with pleasure. So much evenness, sedateness, and regularity, is observed in all they enjoin or expect, that it is impossible but it should be so. My master is an honest, worthy man; every body speaks well of him: My mistress is a cheerful, sweet-tempered woman, and rather heals breeches than widens them. And the children, after such examples, behave to us all like one's own brothers and sisters. Who can but love such a family? I wish, when it shall please God to put me in such a station, that I may carry myself just as my master does; and if I should ever marry, have just such a wife as my mistress: and then, by God's blessing, I shall be happy as they are, and as you, Sir, and my dear mother, have always been. If any thing can make me happier than I am, or continue me my present felicity, it will be the continuance of your's, and my good mother's prayers for, Honoured Sir,

Your ever dutiful son.

LETTER XX.

From a daughter to her mother, by way of excuse, for having neglected to write to her.

Honoured Madam,

THOUGH the agreeable news of your health and welfare, which was brought me last night by the hands of my uncle's man Robin, gives me inexpressible pleasure; yet I am very much concerned that my too long silence should have given you so much uneasiness as I understand it has. I can assure you, Madam, that my neglect in that particular was no ways owing to any want of filial duty or respect, but to a hurry of business, (if I may be allowed to call it so), occasioned by the honour of a visit from my Lady Betty Brilliant, and her pretty niece Miss Charlotte, who are exceeding good company, and whom our family are proud of entertaining in the most elegant manner. I am not insensible, however, that neither this plea, nor any real business, of what importance soever, can justly acquit me for not writing oftener to a parent so tender and indulgent as yourself; but, as the case now stands, I know no other way of making atonement than by a sincere promise of a more strict observance of my duty for the future. If therefore, Madam, you will favour me so far as to forgive this first transgression, you may depend on my word it shall never more be repeated by,

Honoured Madam,

Your dutiful daughter.

LETTER XXI.

*From Robin Redbreast in the garden to Master
BILLY CARELESS abroad at school.*

Dear Master Billy,

AS I was looking into your papa's library window, last Wednesday, I saw a letter ly open, signed Billy Careless, which led my curiosity to read it: but was sorry to find there was not that duty and respect in it which every good boy should shew to his papa; and this I was the more surpris'd at, when I found it was to ask a favour of him. Give me leave, therefore, my dear Billy, to acquaint you, that no one should ever write to his papa, or mamma, without beginning his letter with *Honoured Sir*, or *Honoured Madam*: and, at the same time, not forget to observe, through his whole epistle, the most perfect obedience, in a very obliging, respectful manner. By these means, you may not only increase your papa's affection, but obtain almost any thing from him that you can reasonably ask, provided it be proper, and in his power to grant. What can any good boy desire more? But here, you must permit me, dear Billy, to whistle an unpleasing but very useful song in your ear; which is, 'That you will never get so much as an answer to any letter that is not also wrote *handsome, fair, and large*; which, as I know you are very capable of, am surpris'd you will ever neglect it.' And this you may depend on, for I know your papa extremely well, having frequently sat for hours at his study window hearing him deliver his sentiments to your sisters, and advising

them, in the most good-natured, affectionate manner, always to behave obedient to their parents, and pretty and agreeable to every body else, as well abroad as at home; and, I must say it, his advice and commands, together with your mamma's care and instruction, have had so charming an effect, that they are beloved and admired wherever they go; and at home every servant is extremely fond of them, and always ready to oblige and please them in every thing, which I see daily, when I hop down into the court to breakfast on the crumbs from the kitchen. How easy then is it for you, my dear Billy, who are so much older and wiser than your sisters, to behave and write in the most dutiful and engaging manner! And, further, let me advise you never to lose sight of the love and esteem of your mamma, to whom you are particularly obliged for her constant care to supply your continual wants, which your papa, you are sensible, has not leisure even to think of; besides, her good sense and amiable conduct have so gained the ascendant of your papa, that he does nothing relating to any of you without her consent and approbation; so that, in gaining her esteem, you are almost certain of his: but this you are very sensible of already, and I only just chirp it in your ear, to remind you of good conduct as well as filial duty.

But the morning draws on, and my fellow-songsters are abroad to whistle in the day: so I must take my leave on the wing, and, for the present, bid you farewell: but beg I may never have occasion again to write to you an unpleasing letter of rebuke; and that you will always remember, however distant you are, or however secret you may think yourself from your friends and relations, you will never

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be able to conceal your faults; for some of our prying tattling tribe will be continually carrying them home, to be whistled, in a melancholy strain, in the ears of your papa, much to your shame and discredit, as well as his dislike and my great concern, who am, dearest Billy, your ever watchful and most affectionate friend,

ROBIN REDBREAST.

From my hole in the wall,
at sun-rising, the 1st of
June, 1775.

P. S. However neglectful you may be of your duty, I know you have too much good sense, as well as good nature, to take any thing amiss that I have said in this letter, which is wrote with the freedom and concern of a friend, and to which I was prompted, both by love and gratitude, in return for the plenty of crumbs I have received at your hands, and the kind protection you have always shown me, both in the court and in the garden, from some of your idle companions, who, with sticks and stones, have often, in your absence, aimed at my life.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

LETTER XXII.

From one sister to another,

Dear Sister,

EVER since you went to London, your favourite acquaintance Mrs Friendly and myself have thought our rural amusements dull and insipid, notwithstanding we have the players in town, and

an assembly once a week. At your departure, if you remember, you passed your word to return in a month's time ; but, instead of that, it is now almost a quarter of a year. How can you serve us so ? In short, if you keep us in suspense much longer, we are determined to follow you, and find you out, let the expense and length of the journey be what it will. We live in hopes, however, that, upon the receipt of this notice, you'll return without any farther delay, and prevent our taking such an unmerciful jaunt. Your compliance with this joint request will highly oblige, not only your most sincere and affectionate friends, but

Your ever loving sister.

L E T T E R XXIII.

In answer to the foregoing.

Dear Sister,

I RECEIVED your summons, and can assure Mrs Friendly, as well as yourself, that my long stay in town, notwithstanding all the good company I have met with, and all the diversions with which I have been indulged, has been quite contrary to my inclinations ; and nothing but my Lady Townly's absolute commands not to leave her should have prevented my return to you within the time proposed. You are sensible I have infinite obligations to her, and it would be ingratitude to the last degree not to comply with her injunctions. In order, however, to make you both ample amends for that uneasiness which my long absence has given you, I shall use my utmost endeavours to prevail with her Ladyship to join with

me in a visit to you both in the spring, and to stay with you for a month at least, if not longer. I would advise you, therefore, to save an unnecessary expense, as well as fatigue, and rest contented where you are, till you see

Your ever loving,
and affectionate sister.

LETTER XXIV.

From Lady Goodford to her daughter, a girl of fourteen years old, then under the care of her grandmother in the country.

My dear Child,

THOUGH I know you want no precepts under my mother's care to instruct you in all moral and religious duties, yet there are some things she may possibly forget to remind you of, which are highly necessary for the forming your mind, so as to make that figure in the world I could wish you to do.—I am certain, you will be kept up to your music, singing, and dancing, by the best masters the country affords; and need not doubt but you will very often be told, that good housewifery is a most commendable quality.—I would have you, indeed, neglect none of these branches of education; but, my dear, I should be grieved to hear you were so much attached to them as not to be able to devote two hours, at least, every day to reading.—My father left a collection of very excellent books in all languages behind him, which are yet in being; and as you are tolerably well acquainted with the French and Italian, would have you not be altogether a stranger to their

authors. Poetry, if it be good, (as in that library you will find none that is not so), very much elevates the ideas, and harmonizes the soul; and well-wrote novels are an amusement in which sometimes you may indulge yourself. But history is what I would chiefly recommend;—without some knowledge of this you will be accounted at best but an agreeable trifler. —I would have you gay, lively, and entertaining; but then I would have you able to improve as well as to divert the company you may happen to fall into.

But, my dear child, I must warn you to beware with what disposition you sit down to read books of this nature; for if you slightly skim them over, and merely to gratify your curiosity with the amazing events delivered in them, the research will afford you little advantage. —You must, therefore, consider what you read;—mark well the chain of accidents which bring on any great catastrophe; and this will show you that nothing happens by Chance, but all is entirely governed by the directions of an over ruling Power. —In distinguishing the true causes of the rise and fall of empires, and those strange revolutions that have happened in most kingdoms of the world, you will admire divine Justice, and be far from accusing Providence of partiality, when you find, as frequently you will, the good dethroned, all rights both human and divine sacrilegiously trampled upon, a mock authority established in the place of a real one, and lawless usurpation prosper; because, at the same time, you will see that this does not happen, till a people, grown bold in iniquity, and ripe for destruction, have drawn down upon themselves the severest vengeance of offended Heaven, which is

tyranny and oppression ; and though innocent individuals may suffer in the general calamity, yet it is for the good of the whole, in order to bring them to a just sense of their transgressions, and turn them from their evil ways. — This the historical part of the Bible makes manifest in numberless instances ; and this the calamities which, at different times, have befallen every kingdom and commonwealth, evidently confirm.

I am the more particular in giving you these cautions, because, without observing them, you may be liable to imbibe prejudices which will pervert your judgment, and render you guilty of injustice, without knowing you are so. As you regard, therefore, my commands, which will always be for your improvement and emolument, never be remiss in this point.

Next to history, I should be glad to see you have some smattering in natural philosophy : for which purpose let me recommend to your perusal a work, entitled, *Spectacle de la nature* ; or, *Nature delineated, from the French of Abbe le Pluche* ; being very entertaining philosophical conversations, wherein the wonderful works of Providence, in the animal, vegetable, and mineral, creation are laid open, in four pocket volumes ; in which are interspersed a great variety of useful and explanatory cuts. — Believe me, child, the wide creation presents nothing that affords not infinite matter for delightful speculation ; and the more you examine the works of Nature, the more you will learn to love and adore the great God of nature, the fountain of all pleasure.

I expect your next will be filled with no inquiries on new fashions, nor any directions to your

milliner ; nor shall I be better satisfied with an account of your having begun, or finished, such or such a piece of fine work :—this may inform you that it is other kinds of learning I would have you versed in.——I flatter myself with seeing my commands obeyed, and that no part of what I have said will be lost upon you, which a little more time and knowledge of the world will show you the value of, and prove to you, more than any indulgence I could treat you with, how very much I am

Your affectionate mother,

SOPHRONIA.

LETTER XXV.

To a young lady, cautioning her against keeping company with a gentleman of a bad character.

Dear Niece,

THE sincere love and affection which I now have for your indulgent father, and ever had for your virtuous mother, not long since deceased, together with the tender regard I have for your future happiness and welfare, have prevailed on me to inform you, rather by letter than by word of mouth, that the town rings of your unguarded conduct, and the too great freedoms you take with Mr Freeloze. You have been seen with him (if Fame lies not) in the sideboxes at both theatres ; in St James's Park on Sunday night ; and afterwards at a certain tavern not a mile from thence, which is a house (as I have been credibly informed) of no good repute. You have both, moreover, been seen at Ranelagh assembly, Vauxhall gardens, and what is still more flagrant, at Cuper's fireworks. Don't imagine, niece, that I am in the least prejudiced,

or speak out of any private pique; but let me tell you, your familiarity with him gives me no small concern, as his character is none of the best; and as he has acted in the most ungenerous manner by two or three very virtuous young ladies of my acquaintance, who entertained too favourable an opinion of his honour. 'Tis possible, as you have no great expectancies from your relations, and he has an income, as it is reported, of 200 l. a-year left him by his uncle, that you may be tempted to imagine his address an offer to your advantage. It is much to be questioned, however, whether his intentions are sincere; for, notwithstanding all the fair promises he may possibly make you, I have heard it whispered, that he is privately engaged to a rich, old doating lady, not far from Hackney. Besides, admitting it to be true, that he is really entitled to the annuity above mentioned, yet it is too well known that he is deep in debt; that he lives beyond his income, and has very little, if any, regard for his reputation. In short, not to mince the matter, he is a perfect libertine, and is ever boasting of favours from our weak sex, whose fondness and frailty are the constant topics of his raillery and ridicule.

All this, therefore, duly considered, let me prevail on you, dear niece, to avoid his company as you would a madman; for, notwithstanding I still think you strictly virtuous, yet your good name may be irreparably lost by such open acts of imprudence. As I have no other motive but an unaffected zeal for your interest and welfare, I flatter myself you will put a favourable construction on the liberty here taken by

Your sincere friend, and affectionate aunt.

H

LETTER XXVI.

A letter of thanks, &c.

SIR,

I RECEIVED the favour of your's with a very kind present; and I know not, indeed, at this time, any other way to show my gratitude, than by my hearty thanks for the same. Every thing you do carries a charm with it; your manner of doing it is as agreeable as the thing done. In short, Sir, my heart is full, and would overflow with gratitude, did I not stop, and subscribe myself,

Your most obliged, and
Obedient humble servant,

JOHN WADMAN.

LETTER XXVII.

From an apprentice to his parents.

Honoured Father and Mother,

BY these I let you know that, by your good care and conduct, I am well settled, and pleased with my station, and think it my duty to return you my hearty thanks, and grateful acknowledgment of your love and tender care of me: I will endeavour to go through my business cheerfully. And, having begun well, I hope I shall persevere to do so to the end, that I may be a comfort to you hereafter, and, in some measure, make a return for your love and kindness to me, who am,

Your most dutiful, and

Obedient son and servant,

CHARLES SEDGELY.

LETTER XXVIII.

From an elder brother to a younger.

Dear Brother,

AS you are now gone from home, and are arrived at years of some discretion, I thought it not amiss to put you in mind that your childish affairs ought now to be entirely laid aside, and instead of them more serious thoughts, and things of more consequence, should take place; whereby we may add to the reputation of our family, and gain to ourselves the good esteem of being virtuous and diligent in life, which is of great value, and ought to be studied beyond any trifling amusements whatsoever: for it will be an ornament in youth, and a comfort in old age.

You have too much good nature to be offended at my advice, especially when I assure you, that I as sincerely wish your happiness and advancement in life as I do my own. We are all, thank God, very well, and desire to be remembered to you. Pray, write as often as opportunity and leisure will permit; and be assured a letter from you will always give great pleasure to all your friends here, but to none more than

Your most affectionate brother,
and sincere humble servant,
EDWARD STANLEY.

LETTER XXIX.

A letter from a nephew to an uncle, who wrote to him a letter of rebuke.

Honoured Sir,

I RECEIVED your kind advice, and, by the contents of your letter, perceive I have been represented to you as one of immoral principles. I dare not write you any excuse for the follies and frailties of youth, because, in some measure, I own I have been guilty of them, but not to that degree which you have had them represented: however, your rebuke is not unseasonable, and it shall have the desired effect, as well to frustrate the designs of my enemies, (who aim to prejudice you against me), as to please you, and obey all your commands and advice, which I now sincerely thank you for giving me; and promise, for the future, I will make it my study to reform and regain, by adhering strictly to your instructions, the good opinion you was once so kind to entertain of me. I beg my duty to my aunt, and am,

Your most obliged and ever dutiful nephew,
HENRY MONTAGUE.

LETTER XXX.

Letter from a niece to her aunt.

Madam,

THE trouble I have already given you really concerns me when I think of it; and yet I cannot help intruding again upon your goodness;

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for necessity, that mother of invention, forces us to act contrary to our inclinations: therefore, pray, dear Madam, excuse me if I once more entreat your assistance in this affair, in any manner that you shall think proper; and I hope, at least one time in my life, to be able to convince you, that I have a thorough sense of the many obligations your goodness has conferred upon

Your most dutiful and truly obliged niece,
And very humble servant,
JANE PEMBERTON.

LETTER XXXI.

Letter from a youth at school to his parents.

Honoured Father and Mother,

YOUR kind letter of the 24th inst. I received in due time, and soon after the things you therein mentioned, by the carrier, for which I return you my sincere thanks. They came very opportunely for my occasions. I hope soon to improve myself at school, though, I own, it seems a little hard and irksome to me as yet; but my master gives me great encouragement, and assures me I shall soon get the better of the little difficulties that almost every boy meets with at first, and then it will be a perfect pleasure instead of a task, and altogether as pleasant and easy as it is now irksome and hard.

My humble duty to yourselves; and I beg the favour of you to give my kind love to my brothers and sisters, and remember me to all friends and acquaintance; and you will oblige

Your ever dutiful and obedient son,
CHARLES GOODENOUGH.

LETTER XXXII.

Letter from an apprentice in town to his parents in the country.

Honoured Father and Mother,

THE bearer, Henry Jones, came to see me last night, and told me he should set out for home the next morning. I was not willing to let slip the opportunity of sending you a letter by him, to let you know that I am very well, and like both my master and mistress, and, by what I can see of it, the business entirely well; and do intend (please God) to use my utmost endeavours to make myself master of every thing that belongs to it; in which I shall have treble satisfaction; first, in pleasing my master; secondly, in pleasing my friends; and, thirdly, in benefiting myself. I have but little leisure, nor do I want a great deal; but will take every opportunity to let you know how I go on; and that I am, with great gratitude,

Your ever dutiful and most obedient son.

T. R.

LETTER XXXIII.

From Miss R. at S. to her sister in Salisbury.

I HAVE often, I may say very often, proposed writing a long epistle to my dearest Sukey, and have as often been prevented. Miss P. was to have been the bearer of one; but, to my great surprise, she left me without taking leave, nay, without giving notice of her going, and I never so

much as saw her since yesterday se'ennight, when I very agreeably spent the day with her and Mrs H—, at Mr W—'s, at M—. My uncle, whom I also intended to have wrote by, went away, (as you know he always does) in such a hurry, that I had no time to set about writing a long letter, and a short one I knew would by no means atone for such a long silence. You complain in my last of my writing with too much reserve; for my own part, I think I write with too little, when I reflect on some particulars that my uncle rallied me upon before he went hence; which he never could have known, had he not seen my letters, or been acquainted with the contents of them. What say you to that, my dear? But I forgive.—Well, but what news? say you: I'll tell you. Last Monday morning, a very agreeable party, among whom was Aunt R—, met us at a sweet pleasant cottage of content on Westphalia Common; they brought with them a little elegant repast, exactly suited to the size of the cottage, which, though but just big enough for us to sit down in, was capable of holding a world of happiness, as we proved; for the weather was extremely pleasant, the company perfectly harmonious, and we were all excessively agreeable to each other; but, in an instant, for such a day of pleasure seemed but a moment, the still evening came on, and all our joys were hushed. In short, about eight o'clock we broke up from this sweet little rural retreat, which, believe me, dear Sukey, afforded high entertainment for a day to us all. I wished greatly that you could have been a partaker; but, however, at your return we will attempt the like again. By the help of your company it is possible we may succeed as well a

second time ; though that, I must own, an expectation of this sort is seldom the case. Well, for the present, I will take my leave of the cot ; and now for the news of the town. The first that occurs to me is the marriage of our old mistress, who thought it better late than never, and last Friday shook hands for life with Mr S. the draper. He is a little advanced as well as she, but no matter ; why may there not be pleasure at the latter time of life as well as at the beginning ? though, for my own part, I must confess, I am not for putting happiness off till to-morrow, if it may as well be had to-day.

But, to be serious, my dear, there is no other news all over the town worth mentioning ; 'tis all as insipid as the last dish of old bachelors' tea. But when are we to see you ? You have long, very long, talked of returning home ; pray talk no more of it, nay write no more, but instead of your agreeable letters, let us have your more agreeable company, and you'll most truly oblige

Your affectionate sister, E. B.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

From an elder brother in the country to his younger brother, put apprentice in London.

Dear Brother,

I AM very glad to hear you are pleased with the new situation into which the care of your friends has put you ; but I would have you pleased, not with the novelty of it, but with the real advantage. It is natural for you to be glad that you are under less restraint than you were ; for a master

has neither occasion nor inclination to watch a youth so much as his parents. But if you are not careful, this, although it now gives you a childish satisfaction, may, in the end, betray you into mischief; nay, to your ruin. Though your father is not in sight, dear brother, act always as if you were in his presence; and be assured, that what would not offend him will never displease any body.

You have more sense, I have often told you so, than most persons at your time. Now is the opportunity to make a good use of it; and take it for certain, every right step you enter upon now will be a comfort to you for your life. I would have your reason as well as your fancy pleased with your new situation, and then you will act as becomes you. Consider, brother, that the state of life that charms you so at this time will bring you to independence and affluence; that you will, by behaving as you ought now, become master of a house and family, and have every thing about you at your own command, and have apprentices as well as servants to wait upon you. The master with whom you are placed was some years ago in your situation; and what should hinder you from being hereafter in his? All that is required is patience and industry; and these, brother, are very cheap articles with which to purchase so comfortable a condition.

Your master, I am told, had nothing to begin the world withal. In that he was worse than you; for if you behave well, there are those who will set you up in a handsome manner. So you have sufficient inducements to be good, and a reward always follows it, Brother, farewell! Obey your

master, and be civil to all persons; keep out of company, for boys have no occasion for it; and most that you will meet with is very bad. Be careful and honest, and God will bless you. If ever you commit a fault, confess it at once; for the lie in denying it is worse than the thing itself. Go to church constantly; and write to us often. I think I need not say more to so good a lad as you to induce you to continue so. I am

Your affectionate brother.

L E T T E R XXXV.

A letter of excuse for silence, and assurance it was not out of disrespect.

THERE are times, Madam, in which it is failing in care not to write to one's friends; there are others in which it is prudence. Methinks it better becomes an unhappy man to be silent than to speak; for he tires if he speaks of his misery, or he is ridiculous if he attempts to be diverting. I have not done myself the honour of writing to you since my departure, to avoid one or other of these inconveniencies. I have too much respect for you, Madam, to importune you with my griefs; and I am not fool enough to have a mind to laugh. I know very well that there may be a mean between these two extremes; but, after all, the correspondence of the unhappy is seldom pleasing to those who are in prosperity: and yet, Madam, there are duties with which one ought not to dispense; and it is to acquit myself of them that I now assure you, that no one can be with more esteem and respect than I am,

Your faithful and affectionate servant, I. B.

LETTER XXXVI.

A letter from a servant in London to his master in the country.

SIR,

AS I find you are detained longer in the country than you expected, I thought it my duty to acquaint you that we are all well at home; and to assure you that your business shall be carried on with the same care and fidelity as if you were personally present. We all wish for your return as soon as your affairs will permit; and it is with pleasure that I take this opportunity of subscribing myself,

SIR,

Your most obedient and faithful servant,

SAM. TRUSTY.

LETTER XXXVII.

From a father to his son, just beginning the world.

Dear Billy,

AS you are now beginning life, as it were, and will probably have considerable dealings in your business, the frequent occasions you will have for advice from others will make you desirous of singling out amongst your most intimate acquaintance one or two whom you would view in the light of friends.

In the choice of these your utmost care and caution will be necessary; for, by a mistake here, you

can scarcely conceive the fatal effects you may hereafter experience. Wherefore, it will be proper for you to make a judgment of those who are fit to be your advisers, by the conduct they have observed in their own affairs, and the reputation they bear in the world. For he who has, by his own indiscretions, undone himself, is much fitter to be set up as a landmark for a prudent mariner to shun his courses than an example to follow.

Old age is generally slow and heavy, youth headstrong and precipitate; but there are old men who are full of vivacity, and young men replete with discretion; which makes me rather point out the conduct than the age of the persons with whom you should chuse to associate; though, after all, it is a never-failing good sign to me of prudence and virtue in a young man when his seniors chuse his company, and he delights in theirs.

Let your endeavours therefore be, at all adventures, to consort yourself with men of sobriety, good sense, and virtue; for the proverb is an unerring one that says, "A man is known by the company he keeps." If such men you can single out, while you improve by their conversation, you will benefit by their advice; and be sure to remember one thing, that, though you must be frank and unreserved in delivering your sentiments when occasions offer, yet that you be much readier to hear than speak; for to this purpose it has been significantly observed, that Nature has given a man two ears and but one tongue. Lay in, therefore, by observation, and a modest silence, such a store of ideas, that you may, at their time of life, make no worse figure than they do; and endeavour to benefit yourself rather by other people's ills than

your own. How must those young men expose themselves to the contempt and ridicule of their seniors, who, having seen little or nothing of the world, are continually shutting out, by open mouths and closed ears, all possibility of instruction, and making vain the principal end of conversation, which is improvement? A silent young man makes generally a wise old one, and never fails of being respected by the best and most prudent men. When, therefore, you come among strangers, hear every one speak before you deliver your own sentiments; by this means you will judge of the merit and capacities of your company, and avoid exposing yourself, as I have known many do, by shooting out hasty and inconsiderate bolts, which they would have been glad to recall, when, perhaps, a silent genius in company has burst out upon them with such observations as have struck consciousness and shame into the forward speaker, if he has not been quite insensible of inward reproach.

I have thrown together, as they occurred, a few thoughts, which may suffice for the present, to show my care and concern for your welfare. I hope you will constantly, from time to time, communicate to me whatever you may think worthy of my notice, or in which my advice may be of use to you; for I have no pleasure in this life equal to that which the happiness of my children gives me. And of this you may be assured; for I am, and ever must be,

Your affectionate father.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To an intimate acquaintance, to borrow money.

PRAY favour me, Charles, with twenty guineas by the bearer, who is my servant. I have immediate occasion; but will repay it again whenever you please to make a demand. This letter will answer all the purposes of a note from your obliged humble servant,

RICHARD ROLT.

LETTER XXXIX.

To an acquaintance, to borrow a sum of money for a little time.

Dear Sir,

IF it be quite convenient and agreeable to you, I'll beg the favour of you to lend me fifty pound for the space of three months precisely: any security that you shall require and I can give, you may freely ask. A less time would not suit me; a longer, you may depend on it, I shall not desire. Your answer will oblige, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN ROBINSON.

LETTER XL.

An answer to the foregoing.

Dear Sir,

ANY thing in my power is always very much at your service; the sum you mention I have

now by me, and can very conveniently spare it for the time you fix, and you are most heartily welcome to it. Any hour that you shall appoint to-morrow I'll be ready; and am, with the greatest sincerity,

Your affectionate friend
and humble servant,
CHARLES NUGENT.

LETTER XLI.

*Miss J ———, in answer to Mrs ———, making
an apology for not answering her letter sooner.*

Madam,

IT is paying you but an ill compliment to let one of the most entertaining letters I have met with for some years remain so long unacknowledged. But when I inform you, I have had a house full of strangers almost ever since, who have taken up all my time, I'm sure you'll excuse if not pity me. "Who steals my purse steals trash; it was mine, 'tis his, and has been a slave to thousands; but he who filches from me my precious moments robs me of that which not enriches him, but makes me poor indeed!" It is owing to this want, I should not say loss, of time, (for the hours have not passed by unimproved or unentertaining), that have not been able to tell you sooner how much I envy that leisure and retirement of which you make such admirable use; there it is the mind unbends and enlarges itself; drops off the forms and incumbrances of this world, (which, like garments trailed about for state, as some author has it, only hinder our motion), and seizes and enjoys the

liberty it was born to. O when shall I see my little farm! that calm recess, low in the vale of obscurity, my imagination so often paints to me! You know I'm always in raptures about the country; but your description of Richmond is enough to intoxicate the soundest head.

Adieu! I am interrupted, and in haste, so obliged to conclude.

Your's, &c.

LETTER XLII.

Miss J——to Miss Lovelace, on the present letter-writers, and her opinion of a well-wrote letter.

WANT of time is, I think, the general complaint of all letter-writers; and, *your's in haste* concludes wit, business, every thing. For my own part, my whole life is little more than a perpetual hurry of doing nothing; and I think I never had more business of that sort upon my hands than now. But as I can generally find time to do any thing I have a-mind to do, so can always contrive to be at leisure to pay my respects to Miss L.

But the most universal complaint among scribblers of my rank is want of sense. These generally begin with an apology for their long silence, and end with that moving petition, Excuse this nonsense. This is modest, indeed; but though I am excessive good-natured, I am resolved for the future not to pardon it entirely in any one but myself.

I have often thought there never was a letter wrote well but what was wrote easily; and if I had not some private reasons for being of a con-

trary opinion at this time, should conclude this to be a masterpiece of the kind, both in easiness of thought and facility of expression. And in this easiness of writing (which Mr Wycherley says, is easily wrote) methinks I excel even Mr Pope himself, who is often too elaborate and ornamental, even in some of his best letters; tho', it must be confessed, he outdoes me in some few trifles of another sort, such as spirit, taste, and sense. But let me tell Mr Pope, that letters, like beauties, may be over-drest. There is a becoming negligence in both; and if Mr Pope could only contrive to write without a genius, I don't know any one so likely to hit off my manner as himself. But he insists upon it, that genius is as necessary towards writing as straw towards making bricks; whereas it is notorious, that the Israelites made bricks without that material as well as with.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this, I never had more inclination to write to you, and never fewer materials at hand to write with; therefore have fled for refuge to my old companion, Dulness, who is ever at hand to assist me; and have made use of all those genuine expressions of herself which are included under the notion of want of time, want of spirit, and, in short, want of every thing, but the most unfeigned regard for that lady, whose most devoted

I remain, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

To Miss L—— in answer to her description of Windsor.

YOUR account of the shades of Windsor, and your invitation to them, are equally pleasing

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and poetical. The first puts me in mind of the Elysian groves, where the great souls of antiquity repose themselves on beds of flowers to the sound of immortal lyres; and there, perhaps, the ghosts of departed kings and queens are still regaling themselves with soft music, and gliding about their ancient mansions in fresco; and the latter, of some gentle spirit, the departed genius of some maid of honour, (rather too plump for a ghost), who beckons me into them. I am impatient till I land in those calm retreats, that asylum from curtsying and compliment which I despaired of arriving at in this sublunary state; where, if one can but get into the group, all distinction ceases; where you say I may do any thing I have a-mind to do without impeachment of my breeding; and where, disengaged from all the forms and incumbrances of this nether world, I am like to be in perfect good humour with myself, which in most other places would be reckoned excessively rude.

Little did I expect to meet with you so near the seat of polite education, much less in king's palaces, and among their honourable women.—Tuesday, then, I set out for the glorious land, and the genius that presides over it, if nothing very amazing intervenes. Many are my thanks for your offer of a servant to meet me; but as I chuse to give you as little trouble as possible, shall take an equipage along with me, to kill the dragons and monsters in Maidenhead thicket. These difficulties being overcome, I shall lay my spoils at your feet, as lady of the enchanted castle, and ever after remain,

Your peaceful servant, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

*Miss J— to Miss L—, from an inn on the road,
giving an account of her journey.*

ALAS! the transition!—from yesterday, Henrietta-street, Mrs. L— and Mrs —, to a nasty inn, the officious Mrs Mary, damp sheets, and, perhaps, the itch before morning. Yet say not I want resolution; never virtue had more. Sick to death from the moment you left me, headach beyond description, five men and two women to compliment my way through in the-afternoon; yet boldly rushed through them all, and took my place in the stage-coach myself. After all, lost five shillings earnest by a blunder, went in a wrong coach at last, and such a morning!—But then I had a worshipful society! all silent and sick as myself; for which I thanked my stars; for if they had spoke I had been murdered. Mrs — had almost talked me into nonexistence yesterday morning: and I had been totally annihilated, if you had not come in and restored me to my identity. Pray tell her this in revenge for my headach.

All our friends that we took up in the morning we dropt gradually one by one, as we do when we set out upon the journey of life; and now I have only a young student of Oxford to finish the evening of my day with, and prepare for the grand events of to-morrow. I have just been eating a boiled chicken with him, and talking about Homer and Madam Roland; and am now retiring with Mrs Mary to my bedchamber, whom I shall dismiss with her warming-pan in a moment. If

you do not permit me to pour out the present set of ideas upon all this paper I am inconsolable; for I have no book, and was too absent till now to think I should want one. — How sudden, and how capricious, are the transitions of this mortal stage! Pleasure and pain are parted but by a single moment. Windsor, Fern-hill, Brook-street, and your grey gown, are no more; nor with Mr Locke's associations can I associate a single idea of the past with the present. Even Lady — is defunct. And yet she might. — But she is no more; *et de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*

While virtue shines, or sinks beneath ———
 ——— ——— ——— ——— ———
 ——— ——— ——— ——— ———
 ——— ——— ——— ——— ———

This effort of poetry, and that scrap of Latin which I don't understand, has so exhausted all my forces, that I find myself gradually sinking into the arms of Sleep, and must now resign to the gentle power of dreams.

Farewell—and when like me oppress'd with care,
 You to your own Aquinum shall repair,
 To taste a mouthful of sweet country air;
 Be mindful of your friend, and send me word,
 What joys your fountains and cool streams afford;
 Then to assist your rhapsodies I'll come,
 And add new spirit when we speak of Rome.

JUVENAL.

LETTER XLV.

To Miss L. on the expressions and compliments commonly made use of in letters.

THE money and books came sound as a roach.
 Safe is so common an expression that I am

tired of telling people for ever things come safe. We geniuses are forced to vary our expressions, and invent new terms, as well to show our surprising compass of thought as our great command of language. This sometimes appears stiff and affected to the common class of readers, or hearers, who are apt to be out of their element upon hearing any new or unusual sounds; but our nicer ears cannot always bear the same cadences. There's something peculiar in the make and structure of the auditory nerve that requires diversification and variety, as well as some skill in the anatomy of language, to make an impression on it without wounding it. It is for this reason, when I ask a favour, (a thing I seldom chuse to do) I always select the most delicate phrases I am mistress of; but in regard to forms, which most people are sick of, and yet surfeit their friends with, these I vary according as my own humour or inclination preponderates. Of consequence, when I come towards the end or peroration of a letter, I sometimes communicate my compliments—sometimes desire they may be made known—or where there is a large family, and of consequence a number of civilites to be paid, the laconic style of— My deferences, as usual, has sometimes succeeded beyond my expectations. I am sick of saying for ever, I beg my compliments to such a one.—But, as I propose soon to give your Ladyship a particular dissertation upon style, and as I have many flowers of rhetoric yet inexhausted, I shall wind up the words above mentioned into the form of a letter, and communicate all the things I have to say in the postscript.

LETTER XLVI.

From Miss Jones to Lady—

THE first letter from an absent friend is surely the most agreeable thing to muse over in nature. Your's from Hatfield revived in me those pleasing remembrances which not only enliven but expand the heart; that very heart, which, but the moment before, felt itself mightily shrunk and contracted at the thoughts of your departure. Lady H. Beauclerk partook of the pleasure. The moment she saw your hand she cried Half!—and read it most complacently over my shoulder.

It is to no purpose to tell you how much you were missed by every body that staid in town; how often I cast my eyes up at your dressing-room windows, or how many people I have run over in contemplating your dining-room shutters. All I have to beg of you is, to write to me very often, to be mindful of your health, and to order John, when I go to town again, to tie up that knocker. I could tell you many stories of the sensible things; but of all the insensible ones upon this occasion, your lamp provoked me the most. To see that creature, when I have gone by in the evening, burn so prettily, and with so much alacrity, has put me out of all patience. To what purpose should he light us into your house now? or who would be obliged to him for his paltry rays?—I took a contemplative turn or two in your dressing-room once or twice; but it was so like walking over your grave, that I could not bear to stay.—Lady H. departed two days after you; and, in

short, I lived to see almost every body I loved go before me. So last Saturday I made my own exit, with equal decency and dignity; that is, with a thorough resignation of the world I left, and an earnest desire after that I am now enjoying with Lady Bowyer and Miss Peggy Stonehouse. I shall begin verging towards my last home after having just touched upon the confines of Lady H. B's world, there to subside and be at peace, where I shall have nothing farther to hope for but to meet with a letter from you.

I have implored St Swithen in your behalf; but he either not hears me, or, to pay you a greater compliment, weeps plentifully for your absence. I fear you have had a terrible journey; for scarce a day has passed that he has not shed many tears.

LETTER XLVII.

From a tradesman to a correspondent, requesting the payment of a sum of money.

SIR,

A VERY unexpected demand that has been made on me for money, which I was in hopes of keeping longer in my trade, obliges me to apply for your assistance of the balance of the account between us, or as much of it as you can spare. When I have an opportunity to inform you of the nature of this demand, and the necessity of my discharging it, you will readily excuse the freedom I now take with you; and, as it is an affair of such consequence to my family, I know the friendship you bear me will induce you to serve me effectually.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

TIMOTHY JONES.

LETTER XLVIII.

The answer.

SIR,

IT gives me singular satisfaction that I have it in my power to answer your demand, and am able to serve a man I so much esteem. The balance of the account is two hundred pounds; for half of which I have procured a bank note, and for security divided it, and sent one half by the carrier, as you desired, and have here inclosed the other. I wish you may surmount this and every other difficulty that lyes in the road to happiness; and am,

SIR,

Your's sincerely,

RICHARD TOMPKINS.

LETTER XLIX.

To a lady, inviting her into the country for the summer.

My dear Harriot,

I DO not know whether I flatter myself with an opinion of your speaking to me the other day with an uncommon air of friendship, or whether I am so happy to hold that place, of which I should be so ambitious, in your esteem. I thought you spoke with concern at our parting for the summer, on our family's retiring into the country. For Heaven's sake, my dear, what can you do all the dull season in London?—Vauxhall is not for more than twice; and I think Ranelagh one would not see above half a dozen times in the year.

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What is it, then, you find to entertain you in an empty town for four or five months together? I would fain persuade you not to be in love with so disagreeable a place, and I have an interest in it; for I am a petitioner to you to stay this summer with us, at least I beg you will try. We go, my dear, on Monday: will you go with us? for there is a place in the coach; or will you come when you are settled? I am greatly of opinion that it will please you. I am sure I need not tell you, we shall do all we can to render it agreeable, or that you will make us very happy in complying with the invitation.

You have not seen our house; but it is a very pleasant one. There are fine prospects from the park, and a river runs through the garden; nor are we quite out of the way of entertainment. You know there is a great deal of company about the place; and we have an assembly within a mile of us. What shall I say else to tempt you to come? Why, I will tell you, that you will make us all the happiest people in the world; and that when you are tired you shall not be teased to stay. Dear Harriot, think of it; you will confer an obligation on her, who is, with the truest respect,
Your affectionate friend.

LETTER L.

To a lady, inviting her to a party of pleasure.

Dear Madam,

PEOPLE are interested who invite you to be of their parties, because you are sure to make them happy. This is the reason why you will

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not, perhaps, always comply when you are asked to be of them; but it is certainly a cause of your being solicited oftener than any woman in the world. After you was gone yesterday, Mr Bohun proposed an expedition to Richmond for to-morrow, and he requested me (for he thought he had no title to such a liberty himself) to tell you, that we all understood you to be of the party, though you happened to be out of the way when it was proposed.

I hope you are not engaged; the weather promises to be favourable, and your company you know how we value. I need not tell you, that we shall suppose it matter of form if you are absent: what we shall think of it if you go with us you will know, when you remember what every body thinks who has the pleasure of your company. I beg you will not invent an excuse, but let us depend on you. I am, with the greatest sincerity, dear Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant.

LETTER LI.

To an acquaintance, to borrow a sum of money.

Dear Sir,

IF you have fifty guineas, which you can, without any inconveniency, spare for about six months, I shall be greatly obliged to you to lend them to me for so long.

I have been disappointed, and pressed for money at the same time. It is an unlucky, but not an uncommon, circumstance. You will believe me, that I would not ask this of you, if I were not cer-

LETTER-WRITER.

tain to give it you back; but if it be the least inconvenience to spare the money at all, or to be so long without it, pray refuse me. I am, dear Sir,

Your's, with the greatest sincerity.

LETTER LII.

From a young person in trade to a wholesale dealer, who had suddenly made a demand on him.

SIR,

YOUR demand coming very unexpectedly, I must confess I am not prepared to answer it. I know the stated credit in this article used to be only four months; but as it has been a custom to allow a moderate time beyond this, and as this is only the day of the old time, I had not yet prepared myself. Sir, I beg you will not suppose it is any deficiency more than for the present, that occasions my desiring a little time of you; and I shall not ask any more than is usual among the trade. If you will be pleased to let your servant call for one half of the sum this day three weeks, and the remainder a fortnight afterwards; it shall be ready. However, in the mean time, I beg of you not to let any word slip of this, because a very little hurts a young beginner. Sir, you may take my word with the greatest safety, that I will pay you as I have mentioned; and if you have any particular cause for insisting upon it sooner, be pleased to let me know that I must pay it, and I will endeavour to borrow the money; for if I want credit with you, I cannot suppose that I have lost it with all the world, not knowing what it is that can have given you these distrustful thoughts concerning

Your humble servant.

LETTER LIII.

The wholesale dealer's answer.

SIR,

I AM very sorry to press you; but if I had not reason, I should not have called upon you. It is not out of any disrespect to you that I have made the demand, but we have so many losses that it is fit we should take care. However, there is so much seeming frankness and sincerity in your letter, that I shall desire leave first to ask you, whether you have any dealings with an usurer in Breadstreet, and, if you please, what is his name? Until you have given me the satisfaction on this head, I shall not any farther urge the demand I have made upon you; but, as this may be done at once, I desire your answer by the bearer, whom you well know; for he was, as he informs me, very lately your servant.

I assure you, Sir, it is in consideration of the great opinion I have of your honour that I refer the demand I have made to this question; for it is not customary, and is supposed not to be fair or prudent, to mention our reasons on these occasions. If this is cleared up to me, Sir, as I wish, but I fear it cannot be, I shall make no scruple of the time you mention. I beg your answer without delay, and am sincerely,

Your friend and wellwisher.

LETTER LIV.

From a young person just out of his apprenticeship to a relation, requesting him to lend him a sum of money.

SIR,

I CAN remember nothing but kindness from you to our unhappy family ever since my infancy; and I flatter myself that I have not been guilty of any thing that ought to exclude me in particular from your favour, provided you retain the same kind thoughts towards me. I may be mistaken in what I imagine further, that I have always thought you had no small hand in putting me out; for I think my father could not have commanded such a sum of money without the assistance of some generous friend, and I can think of none but you. If this be the case, Sir, I may be the more ashamed to write to you upon the present occasion, since it is ingratitude to make one benefit the cause of asking others. But I will venture to say in my own favour, that I think my behaviour in the time I have been with my master will not make against me in the application. If I ask what to you shall seem improper, all that I farther request is, to be pardoned.

Sir, I have at present before me the prospect of being a journeyman for a small salary and just getting bread, and that of being a master in one of the most advantageous trades that can be thought of: and this is the time of fixing myself in one situation or the other. I am sensible, Sir, you will see the design of this letter, because the becoming a master cannot be done without money, and I

have no where to apply for such an assistance but to your favour. A moderate sum, Sir, will answer the purpose; and I think I am so well acquainted with the trade as to be soon able to repay it; at least, I am sure I can take care that the value of it shall be always kept in stock, so that there can be no risk to lose any part of it. I have made the computation, and with 100*l.* carefully laid out, I can make all the show that is necessary, and have all conveniencies about me. If you will be so generous, Sir, to complete the goodness you have already begun, by lending me this sum, there is nothing shall tempt me to endanger your losing any part of it; nor shall any thing ever make me forget the obligation.

I am, Sir, your most obliged, and
most obedient humble servant.

LETTER LV.

To a mother, to thank her for her care and tenderness.

Honoured Madam,

I HAVE written twice to my brother, and not doubting but that he would inform you of my being well, I have taken the liberty to omit writing to you. I beg you will be pleased to hear the reasons that weighed with me against a very earnest inclination, that, whether you tell I was right or not, you may acquit me of the charge of disobedience, or want of respect as well as gratitude.

The pain with which I saw you parted from me on the road has made an impression upon my heart which time will never wear out; and I hope; as it will always keep in my remembrance your

tendernefs as well as care for me, that, befides the natural right all your commands have to obedience from me, I fhall, on another principle, avoid every thing that is wrong, left it fhould give you difquiet.

I fhould be unnatural and unpardonable not to have the moft fincere regard for the peace of your mind, and for its compofure. God prevent that I fhould do any thing that fhould affect the firft; and I fhall hope my true concern will guard me againft every thing that might disturb the latter. Indeed, Madam, the care of this prevented my writing; I feared that a letter from me, be the contents ever fo indifferent, might recall my remembrance too fully before you, and that the fame pain might attend it as did your parting with me. This was the only reafon for my not writing before; and, in the moft fincere truth, I have done violence to myfelf in omitting that teftimony of my duty and refpect.

As to occafions of writing, I have yet none, more than to tell you that I do not forget to whom I owe my attention; and to fay how great an happinefs it will be to me to receive your farther thoughts as to things that are about me. I have yet entered into no acquaintance with them, being determined, fo far as my youth and fcanty judgment may allow of it, to confider them before I mix myfelf among them: for this purpofe I have hitherto kept within the houfe, where, partly from the converfation of my relations, and partly from that of other perfons of their acquaintance who vifit them, and fome of whom are perfons of very refpectable talents, I fettle in myfelf fome character of the feveral perfons I am

likely to meet with, and of the occurrences which may fall in my way ; but of all this, having not yet established within myself any firm opinion, I shall take the freedom to write to you.

The greatest subjects of my consideration, Madam, are the instructions and the cautions you gave me ; these will never be out of my remembrance ; and although, perhaps, the tenderness of the parent, or the fears of the mother, may have represented some of these in stronger lights than they are ordinarily seen, yet when I compare them with the observations I have yet had opportunities of making, I find them almost perfectly just, and all very necessary.

No person, I am sure, ever had the happiness of a more affectionate mother ; and I am fully persuaded, that the great experience you have had of the world will render you, more than most people, able to judge of the course of things. I think it a great happiness that so excellent an adviser is so much concerned in my welfare ; and I do promise you, Madam, in the most sincere manner, that I will always prefer, to all other considerations in the world, the admonitions which you shall be pleased to give me. I shall also look upon myself as accountable for the least article of my conduct to you, as well as to God and my own heart ; and it will scarce be a greater obligation upon me to do in every thing as I ought, that the eye of that all-seeing Judge is upon me, than that any wrong step in my behaviour will, besides throwing myself into difficulties, make you unhappy.

You cannot know, Madam, how much, and how gratefully, I think of your care in placing me

where I now am; where, under the eye of a good and prudent person, I have an opportunity to consider of my future conduct, and to see things before I am placed among them, and to consider this great world before I may be said to make a part of it. I see it as a terrible as well as a profitable scene of action: I have already set down many things, which I shall avoid like death, and which I should else, perhaps, have fallen into heedlessly: I hope my future experience will show me many more. Indeed, on the little that I see at present, I cannot wonder that of the youth, who, at my unthinking and rash time of life are let loose into the danger, and never consider it till they are in the midst of it, if they ever consider it at all, the greater part are ruined. I hope I shall profit even by their misfortunes; but whatsoever advantages I have over the rest of the young men I meet withal, I shall always remember, with a due gratitude, that I owe them to you.

I pray daily that you may continue in all respects happy. You will let my brother know, Madam, that I shall endeavour to think of all things as he would have me. He has taught me to write long letters; but if it be not tedious to you, I cannot think the time it has taken me could be more worthily employed; nor can I account that a trouble, which, besides that it is a duty and a satisfaction to myself, will give you pleasure. I am,

Honoured Madam,

With all duty and affection,

Your obedient son.

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LETTER LVI.

From a mother to a son, in answer to the former.

Dear Child,

I HAVE this moment read your letter, and I am set down to write to you. Where corresponding is a trouble, people may defer it to the latest hour; but why should I deny myself a moment the pleasure of conversing with you? My dear, continue in the thoughts you have at present, and you will add all that can be now thrown into the portion of my happiness. I interrupt myself, by casting my eye over and over upon your letter, and the fulness of my heart prevents my informing you of its sensations. If you should see more blots than this, which is just now made in my writing, do not wonder, or be uneasy. I will not dissemble to you that they are made by tears; but, dearest son, these are tears that flow from transport, which has no other expression. Sure no mother was ever happier in her children. Your brother is esteemed, nay, he is almost adored, by every body. Your sister is settled to an advantage that was beyond my utmost expectations; and yet she is so good a woman, that her husband thinks himself under everlasting obligations. You, my dear Jack, were my only care; and I had more fear for you than all; as the youngest, that is, child, as the latest remembrance of your honoured father, you had a larger share of my tenderness than either, and you was destined to a scene of the greatest danger. Heaven alone can tell what have been my anxieties and fears about you, and how

continual my prayers for your security. They are all granted; and instead of being, as I feared you would, an occasion of continual alarm to me, you are adding more than any of them to my contentment. I know your good heart, and I can see what a joy it is to you to perceive you make me happy: in such a mind as your's there can be wanting no other motive to be good beside the excellence of virtue; but I am sure, that if this were not sufficient, the very thought that your mother's peace depended upon your conduct would keep you in the way of goodness.

My dear child, regard your brother: no person is so able to advise you, and he loves you with more than the common affection of the relation; he admires your good sense, and he esteems your principles. Dear son, think what an honour it is to have the esteem of so excellent a man; think what a happiness it is to have so fine a character at so tender an age as your's; and as you show me how much my satisfaction is an object of your concern, remember what a transport it must be to me to hear of you so favourably.

I shall not repeat to you, my dear, the cautions which I gave you, for I see you will not need to be put again in remembrance: only reverence truth, be acquainted with no one till you know that he deserves it, and avoid bad women.

If it can give you satisfaction, and I am sure it will do so, to hear that every thought of your heart has my perfect approbation, you hear it truly; but although there is not any the least part of your conduct that does not give me pleasure, there is, although you will be surprised to hear it, something in your brother's, with respect to you,

that gives me pain. He told me of your asking his advice upon an inconsiderable subject, and his giving it to you rather honestly than elegantly. Dear child, take care of your heart, and you may be less uneasy about your expressions: let your thoughts be good, and never be uneasy about the words you put them in. The books recommended to you may be good for nothing, but you have no occasion for any; nor is it a pin-matter in the affairs of life, whether you put every word where it should be. But this is all a trifle; nor shall I pretend to enter into the matter; if it be worth any consideration, he is the best judge, so pray mind him; but what I speak of is the manner in which he says he wrote of your cousin.

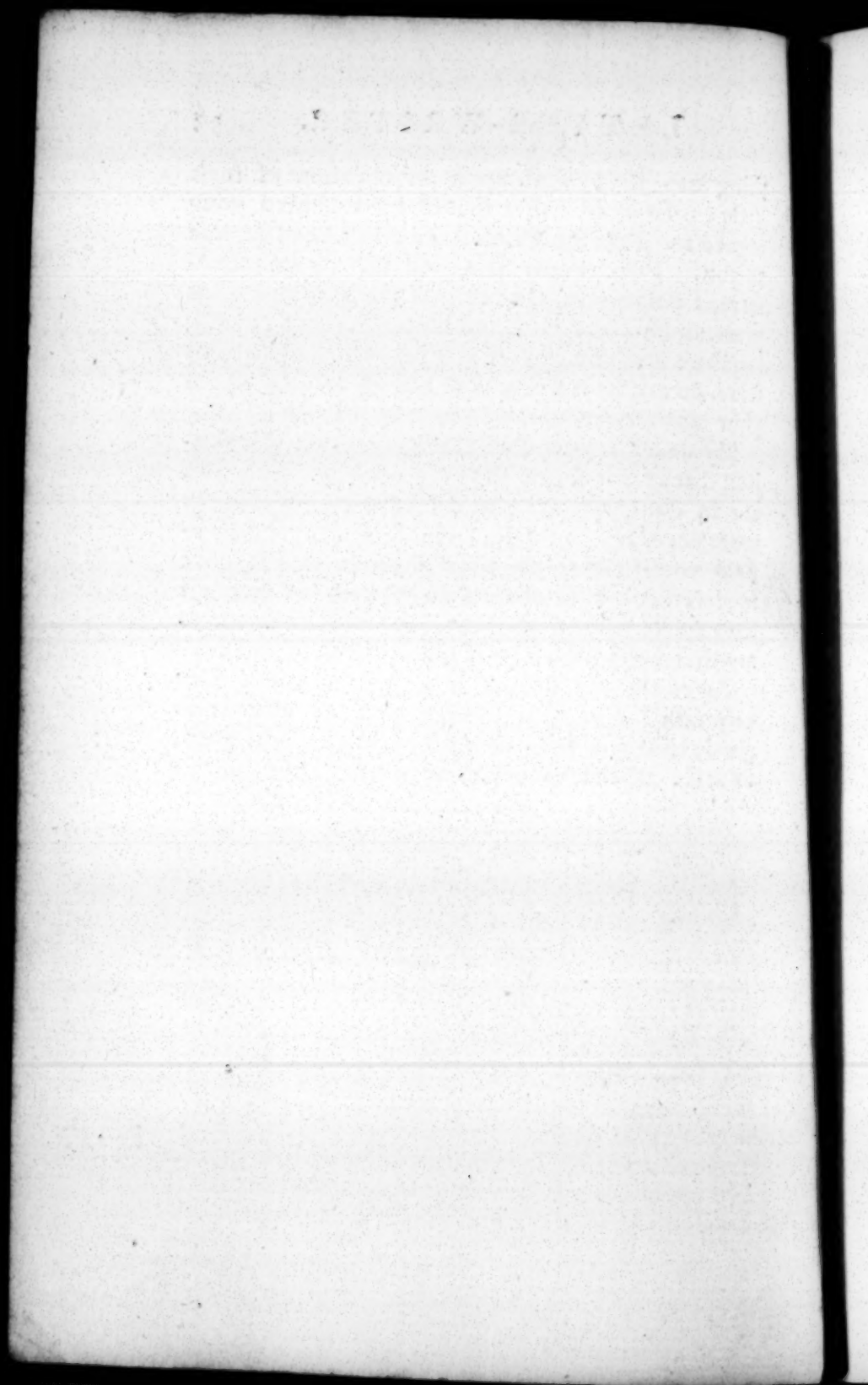
My dear, always respect your elders, and do not let any little schoolboy's lesson put you above them in your own opinion, because they have forgotten it; nor because your cousin is a plain man, do you suppose he is less capable to advise you. He is a person of undoubted probity and uprightness of heart, and that is worth all the Greek and Latin of Westminster and Eaton: he has made his way to a plentiful fortune, and he has the respect and esteem of all that he ever was concerned with. Would you wish for a better character or better fortune! God send you may conduct yourself thro' the world just as he has done! I, that would weary Heaven with prayers for you, wish you nothing better. I do not pretend to say your brother is wrong in his judgment about this matter, for I do not understand the nature of it; all that I know is, you will never write a letter that will please me more than this you have sent already; and I think, had I been in his place, I would not have put any

thing into your mind upon an occasion of such little consequence, that should have abated your regard for a person whose advice will be of service to you. But I know you will not do so. Preserve, I desire you, that respect for him which his years, and his integrity, and his success in the world, require: and whatsoever you may think about this trifle, do not let it lessen your esteem for one whom your mother recommends to you.

My dear, I have said the more upon this subject, because it seems the only one on which you are in danger to err; and I have thought it the more necessary to say so, because the regard I desired you to pay to your brother might have rendered it a kind of duty to go into his error: I have spoke to him about it, and he desires me to say that he is perfectly of my opinion.

Farewell, my dearest boy; you have a very easy task before you; seeing you are already so good, that you need only go on in the same path, to make all that love you happy.

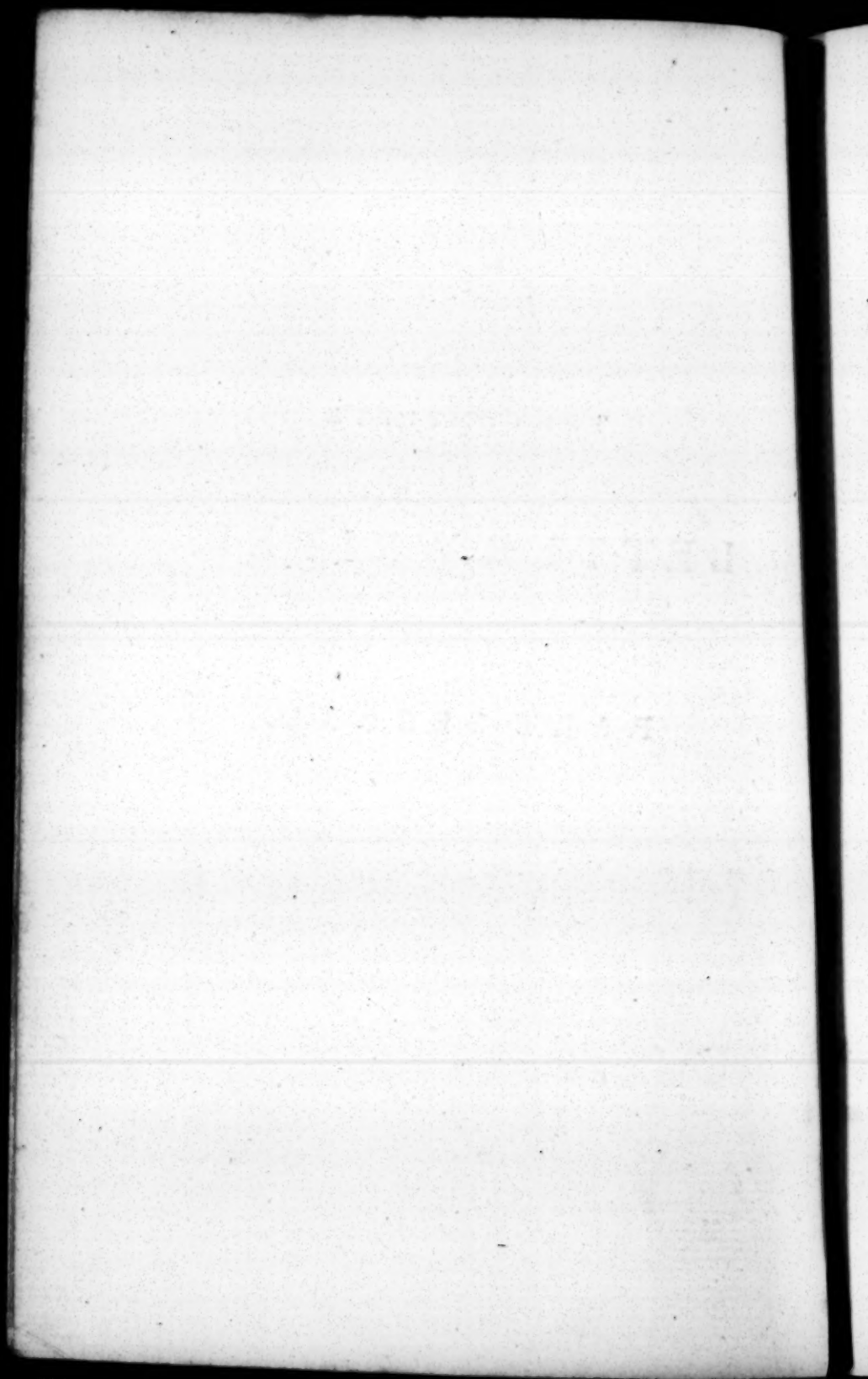
Your affectionate mother.



THE COMPLETE

LETTER-WRITER.

PART SECOND.



THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART II.

LETTERS of Courtship and Marriage.

LETTER I.

*From a young person in business to a gentleman,
desiring leave to wait on his daughter.*

SIR,

I HOPE the justness of my intentions will excuse the freedom of this letter, whereby I am to acquaint you of the affection and esteem I have for your daughter. I would not, Sir, offer at any indirect address, that should have the least appearance of inconsistency with her duty to you, and my honourable views to her; chusing, by your influence, if I may approve myself to you worthy of that honour, to commend myself to her approbation. You are not insensible, Sir, by the credit I have hitherto preserved in the world, of my ability, by God's blessing, to make her happy; and this the rather emboldens me to request the favour of an evening's conversation with you, at your first convenience, when I will more fully explain myself, as I earnestly hope, to your satisfaction, and take

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my encouragement or discouragement from your own mouth. I am, Sir, in the mean time, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant.

LETTER II.

From a young lady to her father, acquainting him with a proposal of marriage made to her.

Honoured Sir,

AS young Mr Lovewell, whose father, I am sensible, is one of your intimate acquaintance, has, during your absence in the country, made an open declaration of his passion for me, and pressed me closely to comply with his overtures of marriage, I thought it my duty to decline all offers of that nature, however advantageous they might seem to be, till I had your thoughts on so important an affair, and I am absolutely determined either to discourage his addresses, or keep him at least in suspense, till your return, as I shall be directed by your superior judgment. I beg leave, however, with due submission, to acquaint you of the idea I have entertained of him, and I hope I am not too blind, or partial, in his favour. He seems to me to be perfectly honourable in his intentions, and to be no ways inferior to any gentleman of my acquaintance hitherto, in regard to good sense or good manners.—I frankly own, Sir, I could admit of his addresses with pleasure, were they attended with your consent and approbation. Be assured, however, that I am not so far engaged as to act with precipitation, or comply with any offers inconsistent with that filial duty which, in gratitude

to your paternal indulgence, I shall ever owe you. Your speedy instruction, therefore, in so momentuous an article, will prove the greatest satisfaction imaginable to,

Honoured Sir,

Your most dutiful daughter.

LETTER III.

From a daughter to her mother, upon the same occasion.

Honoured Madam,

SOON after I left you and my friends in the country, I happily engaged with one Mrs Prudence, a governess of a noted young ladies' boarding-school at the court end of the town, to act as her assistant. She has treated me, ever since I have been with her, with the utmost good-nature and condescension, and has all along endeavoured to make my service more easy and advantageous to me than I could reasonably expect. On the other hand, as a grateful acknowledgment of her favours, I have made her interest my whole study and delight. My courteous deportment towards the young ladies, and my constant care to oblige my governess, have not only gained me the love and esteem of the whole house, but young Mr Byron, the dancing-master, who attends our school weekly, has cast a favourable eye upon me for some time, and has lately made me such overtures of marriage, as are, in my own opinion, worthy of my attention. However, notwithstanding he is a great favourite of Mrs Prudence, a man of unblemished character, and very extensive

business, I thought it would be an act of the highest ingratitude to so indulgent a parent as you have been to me, to conceal from you an affair whereon my future happiness or misery must so greatly depend. As to his person, age, and temper, I must own, Madam, with a blush, that they are all perfectly agreeable; and I should think myself very happy should you countenance his addresses. I flatter myself, however, that I have so much command of my own passions, as in duty, to be directed, in so momentous an affair, by your superior judgment. Your speedy answer, therefore, will be looked upon as an additional act of indulgence shown to,

Your most dutiful daughter.

LETTER IV.

The mother's answer to the foregoing.

Dear Daughter,

I RECEIVED your's in regard to the overtures of marriage made you by Mr Byron; and as that is a very weighty affair, I shall return to London as soon as possible, in order to make all due inquiries. And in case I find no just grounds for exceptions to the man, I have none to his occupation; since it is suitable enough to that state of life for which you seem to have a peculiar taste. However, though I should rejoice to see you settled to your satisfaction and advantage, and though you seem to entertain a very favourable opinion of his honour, and abilities to maintain you in a very decent manner, yet I would have you weigh well the momentous matter in debate. Don't be

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too hasty, my dear ; consider, all is not gold that glitters. Men are too often false and perfidious ; promise fair, and yet, at the same time, aim at nothing more than the gratification of their unruly desires. I don't say that Mr Byron has any such dishonourable intentions, and I hope he has not ; for which reason I would only have you act with discretion and reserve ; give him neither too great hopes of success, nor an absolute denial to put him in despair. All that you have to say till you see me is this, that you have no aversion to his person ; but that you are determined to be wholly directed by your mother in an affair of so serious a concern. This will naturally induce him to make his application to me on my first arrival ; and you may depend upon it, no care shall be wanting on my side to promote your future happiness and advantage. I am,

Dear daughter,

Your truly affectionate mother.

LETTER. V

A young lady's answer to a gentleman's letter, who professes an aversion to the tedious forms of courtship.

SIR,

I AM no more fond of the fashionable modes of courtship than yourself. Plain dealing, I own, is best ; but, methinks, common decency should always be preserved.

There is something so peculiar and whimsical in your manner of expression, that I am absolutely at a loss to determine whether you are really serious,

or only write for your own amusement. When you explain yourself in more intelligible terms, I shall be better able to form a judgment of your passion, and more capable of returning you a proper answer. What influence your future addresses may have over me I cannot say; but, to be free with you, your first attempt has made no impression on the heart of

MIRA.

L E T T E R VI.

The lady's reply to another letter from the same gentleman, wherein he more explicitly avows his passion.

SIR,

SINCE neither of us, I perceive, is overfond of squandering our time away in idle, unmeaning compliments, I think proper to inform you, in direct terms, that the disposal of my person is not altogether in my own power: and that, notwithstanding my father and mother are both deceased, yet I transact no single affair of any moment without consulting Sir Orlando Wiseman of Lincoln's Inn, who is my counsel upon all occasions, and is a gentleman, as I conceive, of the strictest honour and honesty, and one on whose judgment I can safely rely. I will be so fair and just to you, as freely to acknowledge, that I have no objection to your person. If, therefore, you think proper to wait on him with your proposals, and I find that he approves them, I shall act without any mental reservation, and be very apt to encourage a passion that I imagine to be both honourable and sincere. I am,

S I R,

Your humble servant.

LETTER VII.

From an aunt to her nephew, who had complained of ill success in his addresses.

Dear Nephew,

I RECEIVED your doleful ditty, in regard to your ill success in your late love adventure with Miss Snow. No marble monument was ever half so cold, or vestal virgin half so coy! she turns a deaf ear, it seems, to your most ardent vows and what of all that? by your own account it appears she has given you no flat denial; neither has she peremptorily forbid your visits. Really, nephew, I thought a young gentleman of your good sense and penetration should be better versed in the arts of love, than to be cast down all at once, and quit the field upon the first repulse. You should consider that she is not only a beauty, but a very accomplished lady. You must surely be very vain to imagine, that one of her education, good sense, and real merit, should fall an easy victim into your arms. Her affections must be gradually engaged; she looks upon matrimony as a very serious affair, and will never give way, I am fully persuaded, to the violence of an ill-grounded passion. For shame, nephew; shake off that unbecoming bashfulness, and show yourself a man. Lovers, like soldiers, should endure fatigues. Be advised; renew the attack with double vigour; for she is a lady worth your conquest. The revolution of a day (as the ingenious Mr Rowe has it) may bring such turns as Heaven itself could scarce have promised. Cheer up, dear nephew, under that thought. When I

hear from you again, a few weeks hence, I am not without hopes, if you will follow my advice, of your carrying the siege, and making her comply with your own terms of accommodation. In the meantime, depend upon it, no stone shall be left unturned on my part, that may any ways contribute towards your good success, as I cannot, without injustice to the lady, but approve your choice.

I am your affectionate aunt.

LETTER VIII.

From a daughter to her father, wherein she dutifully expostulates against a match he had proposed to her with a gentleman much older than herself.

Honoured Sir,

THOUGH your injunctions should prove diametrically opposite to my own secret inclinations, yet I am not insensible, that the duty which I owe you binds me to comply with them. Besides, I should be very ungrateful, should I presume in any point whatever, considering your numberless acts of parental indulgence towards me, to contest your will and pleasure. Though the consequences thereof should prove never so fatal, I am determined to be all obedience, in case what I have to offer in my own defence should have no influence over you, or be thought an insufficient plea for my aversion to a match, which, unhappily for me, you seem to approve of. It is very possible, Sir, the gentleman you recommend to my choice may be possessed of all that substance, and all those good qualities, that bias you so strongly in his favour;

but be not angry, dear Sir, when I remind you, that there is a vast disproportion in our years. A lady of more experience, and of a more advanced age, would, in my humble opinion, be a much fitter help-mate for him. To be ingenuous, (permit me, good Sir, to speak the sentiments of my heart without reserve for once), a man almost in his grand climacteric can never be an agreeable companion for me; nor can the natural gaiety of my temper, which has hitherto been indulged by yourself in every innocent amusement, be over agreeable to him. Though his fondness at first may connive at the little freedoms I shall be apt to take; yet, as soon as the edge of his appetite shall be abated, he'll grow jealous, and for ever torment me without a cause. I shall be debarred of every diversion suitable to my years, though never so harmless and inoffensive; permitted to see no company; hurried down, perhaps, to some melancholy rural recess; and there, like my Lady Grace in the play, sit, pensive and alone, under a green tree. Your long experienced goodness, and that tender regard which you have always expressed for my ease and satisfaction, encourage me thus freely to expostulate with you on an affair of so great importance. If, however, after all, you shall judge the inequality of our age an insufficient plea in my favour, and that want of affection for a husband is but a trifle, where there is a large fortune, and a coach and six to throw into the scale; if, in short, you shall lay your peremptory commands upon me to resign up all my real happiness and peace of mind for the vanity of living in pomp and grandeur, I am ready to submit to your superior judgement. Give me leave, however, to ob-

serve, that it is impossible for me ever to love the man into whose arms I am to be thrown : and that my compliance with so detested a proposition is nothing more than the result of the most inviolable duty to a father, who never made the least attempt before to thwart the inclinations of

His ever obedient daughter.

LETTER IX.

From a young lady to a gentleman that courted her, whom she could not like, but was forced by her parents to receive his visits, and think of none else for her husband.

SIR,

IT is a very ill return which I make to the respect you have for me, when I acknowledge to you, that though the day of our marriage is appointed, I am incapable of loving you. You may have observed, in the long conversation we have had at those times that we were left together, that some secret hung upon my mind. I was obliged to an ambiguous behaviour, and durst not reveal myself farther, because my mother, from a closet near the place where we sat, could both hear and see our conversation. I have strict commands from both my parents to receive you, and am undone for ever except you will be so kind and generous as to refuse me. Consider, Sir, the misery of bestowing yourself upon one, who can have no prospect of happiness but from your death. This is a confession made, perhaps, with an offensive sincerity ; but that conduct is much to be preferred to a secret dislike, which could not but pall all the

sweets of life, by imposing on you a companion that dotes and languishes for another. I will not go so far as to say my passion for the gentleman, whose wife I am by promise, would lead me to any thing criminal against your honour. I know it is dreadful enough to a man of your sense to expect nothing but forced civilities in return for tender endearments, and cold esteem for unreserved love. If you will, on this occasion, let Reason take place of Passion, I doubt not but Fate has in store for you some worthier object of your affection, in recompense of your goodness to the only woman that could be insensible of your merit. I am,

SIR, Your most humble servant,
M. H.

LETTER X.

*From a young lady to a gentleman who courts her,
and whom she suspects of infidelity.*

SIR,

THE freedom and sincerity with which I have at all times laid open my heart to you, ought to have some weight in my claim to a return of the same confidence: but I have reason to fear, that the best of men do not always act as they ought. I write to you what it would be impossible to speak: but, before I see you, I desire you will either explain your conduct last night, or confess that you have used me not as I have deserved of you.

It is in vain to deny that you took pains to recommend yourself to Miss Peacock: your earnestness of discourse also showed me that you were no stranger to her. I desire to know, Sir, what sort

of acquaintance you can wish to have with another person of character, after making me believe that you wished to be married to me. I write very plainly to you, because I expect a plain answer. I am not apt to be suspicious, but this was too particular; and I must be either blind or indifferent to overlook it. Sir, I am neither; though, perhaps, it would be better for me if I were one or the other.

I am your's, &c.

LETTER XI.

From a gentleman engaged to a lady, who had been seen talking to another, in answer to the foregoing.

My dearest Jenny,

WHAT can have put it into your thoughts to be suspicious of me, whose heart and soul you know are truly your's, and whose whole thoughts and wishes are but on you? Sweet quarreller, you know this. What afternoon have I spent from you? or whom did you ever see me speak to without distaste, when it prevented my talking with you?

You know how often you have cautioned me not to speak to you before your uncle; and you know he was there. But you do well to abuse me for being too obedient to your commands; for I promise you, you shall never get any other cause. I thought it most prudent to be seen talking with another, when it was my business not so much as to look at you. Miss Peacock is a very old acquaintance: she knows my perfect devotion to you, and she very well knew all that civility and ear-

ness of discourse about nothing was pretended. I write to you before I come, because you commanded me; but I will make you ask my pardon in a few minutes for robbing me of those few which might have been passed with you, and which it has taken to write this letter. My sweetest quarreller, I am coming to you. After this never doubt but that I am

Your's, most truly.

LETTER XII.

From a gentleman to a lady, whom he accuses of inconstancy.

Madam,

YOU must not be surpris'd at a letter in the place of a visit from one who cannot but have reason to believe it may easily be as welcome as his company.

You should not suppose, if lovers have lost their sight, that their senses are all banished: and if I refuse to believe my eyes, when they show me your inconstancy, you must not wonder that I cannot stop my ears against the accounts of it. Pray let us understand one another properly; for I am afraid we are deceiving ourselves all this while. Am I a person whom you esteem, whose fortune you do not despise, and whose pretensions you encourage? or am I a troublesome coxcomb, who fancies myself particularly received by a woman who only laughs at me? If I am the latter, you treat me as I deserve; and I ought to join with you in saying I deserve it: but if it be otherwise, and you receive me, as I think you do, as a person

you intend to marry, (for it is best to be plain on these occasions), for Heaven's sake, what is the meaning of that universal coquetry in public, where every fool flatters you, and you are pleased with the meanest of them? And what can be the meaning that I am told you, last night in particular, was an hour with Mr Marlow, and are so wherever you meet him, if I am not in company? Both of us, Madam, you cannot think of; and I should be sorry to imagine that, when I had given you my heart so entirely, I shared your's with any body.

I have said a great deal too much to you, and yet I am tempted to say more: but I shall be silent. I beg you will answer this, and I think I have a right to expect that you do it generously and fairly. Do not mistake what is the effect of the distraction of my heart for want of respect to you. While I write this, I dote upon you, but I cannot bear to be deceived where all my happiness is centered.

Your most unhappy, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

From a lady to her lover, who suspected her of receiving the addresses of another. In answer to the above.

S I R,

IF I did not make all the allowances you desire in the end of your letter, I should not answer you at all. But although I am really unhappy to find you are so, and the more to find myself to be the occasion, I can hardly impute the unkindness and incivility of your letter to the single cause you would have me. However, as I would not be suspected of any thing that should justify such treat-

ment from you, I think it necessary to inform you, that what you have heard has no more foundation than what you have seen: however, I wonder that other eyes should not be as easily alarmed as your's; for, instead of being blind, believe me, Sir, you see more than there is. Perhaps, however, their sight may be as much sharpened by unprovoked malice as your's by undeserved suspicion.

Whatever may be the end of this dispute, (for I do not think so lightly of lovers' quarrels as many do), I think it proper to inform you, that I never have thought favourably of any one but yourself; and I shall add, that, if the fault of your temper, which I once little suspected, should make me fear you too much to marry, you will not see me in that state with any other, nor courted by any man in the world.

I did not know that the gaiety of my temper gave you uneasiness; and you ought to have told me of it with less severity. If I am particular in it, I am afraid it is a fault in my natural disposition: but I would have taken some pains to get the better of that, if I had known it was disagreeable to you. I ought to resent this treatment more than I do, but do not insult my weakness on that head; for a fault of that kind would want the excuse this has for my pardon, and might not be so easily overlooked, though I should wish to do it. I should say I will not see you to-day, but you have an advocate that pleads for you much better than you do for yourself. I desire you will first look carefully over this letter, for my whole heart is in it, and then come to me.

Your's, &c.

LETTER XIV.

*From a young tradesman to a lady, whom he had seen
in public.*

Madam,

PERHAPS you will not be surpris'd to receive a letter from a person who is unknown to you, when you reflect how likely so charming a face may be to create impertinence; and I persuade myself that, when you remember where you sat last night at the playhouse, you will not need to be told this comes from the person who was just before you.

In the first place, Madam, I ask pardon for the liberty I then took of looking at you, and for the greater liberty I now take in writing to you. But, after this, I beg leave to say, that my thoughts are honourable, and to inform you who I am; I shall not pretend to be any better: I keep a shop, Madam, in Henrietta-street; and, though but two years in trade, I have a tolerable custom. I do not doubt but it will increase, and I shall be able to do something for a family. If your inclinations are not engaged, I should be very proud of the honour of waiting on you; and, in the mean time, if you please to desire any friend to ask my character in the neighbourhood, I believe it will not prejudice you against,

Madam,

Your most humble servant.

LETTER XV.

From a relation of the lady, in answer to the above.

SIR,

THERE has come into my hands a letter, which you wrote to Miss Maria Stebbing. She is a relation of mine, and is a very good girl; and I dare say you will not think the worse of her for consulting her friends in such an affair as that you wrote about: besides, a woman could not well answer such a letter herself, unless it was with a full refusal, and that she would have been wrong to have done, until she knew something of the person that wrote it, as wrong as to have encouraged him.

You seem very sincere and open in your designs; and as you gave permission to inquire about you among your neighbours, I, being her nearest friend, did that for her. I have heard a very good account of you; and, from all that I see, you may be very suitable for one another. She has some fortune; and I shall tell you farther, that she took notice of you at the play, and does not seem perfectly averse to seeing you in the presence of

Your humble servant, A. H.

LETTER XVI.

From a lover who had cause of displeasure; and determines never to see the lady again.

Madam,

THERE was a time when if any one should have told me that I should ever have written to

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you such a letter as I am now writing, I would as soon have believed that the earth would have burst asunder, or that I should see stars falling to the ground, or trees and mountains rising to the heavens. But there is nothing too strange to happen. One thing would have appeared yet more impossible than my writing it, which is, that you should have given me the cause to have written it, and yet that has happened.

The purpose of this is to tell you, Madam, that I shall never wait on you again. You will truly know what I make myself suffer when I impose this command upon my own heart; but I would not tell you of it, if it were not too much determined for me to have a possibility of changing my resolution.

It gives me some pleasure that you will feel no uneasiness for this, though I should also have been very averse some time ago even to have imagined that; but you know where to employ that attention of which I am not worthy the whole, and with a part I shall not be contented. I was a witness, Madam, yesterday of your behaviour to Mr Henley. I had often been told of this, but I have refused to listen to it. I supposed your heart no more capable of deceit than my own: but I cannot disbelieve what I have been told on such authority, when my own eyes confirm it. Madam, I take my leave of you, and beg you will forget there ever was such a man as

Your humble servant.

LETTER XVII.

*From a young lady to her father, acquainting him
with the addresses of a young tradesman,*

Honoured Sir,

I THINK it my duty to acquaint you, that a gentleman of this town, by name Wills, and business a linen-draper, has made some overtures to my cousin Harcourt, in the way of courtship to me. My cousin has brought him once or twice into my company, which he could not well decline doing, because he has dealings with him, and has a high opinion of him and his circumstances. He has been set up three years, has very good business, and lives in credit and fashion. He is about twenty-seven years old, a likely man enough, seems not to want sense or manners, and is come of a good family. He has broke his mind to me, and boasts how well he can maintain me. Though, I assure you, Sir, I have given him no encouragement; but told him that I had no thoughts of changing my condition yet a-while, and should never think of it but in obedience to my parents; therefore desired him to talk no more on that subject to me: yet he resolves to persevere, and pretends extraordinary affection and esteem. I would not, Sir, by any means omit to acquaint you with the beginning of an affair, which it would be want of duty in me to conceal from you, and show a guilt and disobedience unworthy of the kind indulgence and affection you have always shewn to,

S I R,

Your most dutiful daughter.

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My humble duty to my honoured mother; love to my brother and sister; and respects to all friends. Cousin Harcourt, and his wife and sister, desire their kind respects. I cannot write enough of their civility to me.

L E T T E R XVIII.

Her father's answer, on a supposition that he does not approve of the young man's addresses.

Dear Polly,

I HAVE received your letter, dated the 4th inst. wherein you acquaint me of the proposals made to you, through your Cousin Harcourt's recommendation, by one Mr Wills. I hope, as you assure me, that you have given no encouragement to him; for I by no means approve of him for your husband. I have enquired of one of his townsmen, who knows him and his circumstances very well, and I am neither pleased with them nor with his character; and wonder my cousin would so inconsiderately recommend him to you. Indeed I doubt not of Mr Harcourt's good intentions; but I insist upon it, that you think nothing of the matter, if you would oblige

Your indulgent father.

Your mother gives her blessing to you, and joins with me in the above advice. Your brother and sister, and all friends, send their love and respects to you.

LETTER XIX.

The father's answer, on a supposition that he does approve of the young man's address.

My dear Daughter,

IN answer to your's of the 4th instant, relating to the address of Mr Wills, I would have you neither wholly encourage or discourage his suit; for if, on inquiry into his character and circumstances, I shall find that they are answerable to your cousin's good opinion of them, and his own assurances, I know not but his suit may be worthy of attention. But, my dear, consider that men are deceitful, and always put the best side outwards; and it may possibly, on strict inquiry, which the nature and importance of the case demands, come out far otherwise than it at present appears. Let me advise you, therefore, to act in this matter with great prudence, and that you make not yourself too cheap; for men are apt to slight what is too easily obtained. Your cousin will give him hope enough, while you don't absolutely deny him: and, in the mean time, he may be told, that you are not at your own disposal, but entirely resolved to abide by my determination and direction in an affair of this great importance; and this will put him upon applying to me, who, you need not doubt, will in this case, as in all others, study your good, as becomes

Your indulgent father.

Your mother gives her blessing to you, and joins with me in the above advice. Your brother and sister, and all friends, send their love and respects to you.

LETTER XX.

A modest lover desiring an aunt's favour to him for her niece.

Good Madam,

I HAVE several times, when I have been happy in the company of your good niece, thought to have spoken my mind, and to declare to her the true value and affection I have for her: but just as I have been about to speak, my fears have vanquished my hopes, and I have been obliged to suspend my design. I have thrown out several hints, that I thought would have led the way to a fuller disclosing of the secret that is too big for my breast; and yet, when I am near her, it is too important for utterance. Will you be so good, Madam, to break the way for me, if I am not wholly disappointed of by you, and prepare her dear mind for a declaration that I must make, and yet know not how to begin.—My fortune and expectations make me hope that I may not on these accounts be deemed unworthy. And could I, by half a line from your hand, hope that there is no other bar, I should be enabled to build on so desirable a foundation, and to let your niece know how much my happiness depends upon her favour. Excuse, good Madam, I beseech you, this trouble, and presumptuous request, from

Your obliged humble servant.

LETTER XXI.

The aunt's answer, supposing the gentleman deserves encouragement.

SIR,

I CANNOT say I have any dislike, as to my own part, to your proposal, or your manner of making it, whatever my niece may have; because diffidence is generally the companion of merit, and a token of respect. She is a person of prudence, and all her friends are so thoroughly convinced of it, that her choice will have the weight it deserves with us all: so I cannot say what will be the event of your declaration to her; yet, so far as I may take upon myself to do, I will not deny your request; but, on her return to-morrow, will break the ice, as you desire, not doubting your honour, and the sincerity of your professions; and I shall tell her, moreover, what I think of the advances you make. I believe she has had the prudence to keep her heart entirely disengaged, because she would otherwise have told me; and is not so mean spirited as to be able to return tyranny and insult for true value, when she is properly convinced of it. Whoever has the happiness (permit me, though her relation, to call it so) to meet with her favour, will find this her character; and that it is not owing to the fond partiality of, Sir,
Your friend and servant.

LETTER XXII.

From a respectful lover to his mistress.

Dear Madam,

I HAVE long struggled with the most honourable and respectful passion that ever filled the

heart of man ; I have often tried to reveal it personally, as often in this way ; but never till now could prevail upon my fears and doubts. I can no longer struggle with a secret that has given me so much torture to keep, and yet hitherto more when I have endeavoured to reveal it. I never entertain the hope of seeing you without rapture ; but when I have that pleasure, instead of being animated, as I ought, I am utterly confounded. What can this be owing to, but a diffidence in myself, and an exalted opinion of your worthiness ? And is not this a strong token of ardent love ? Yet, if it be, how various is the tormenting passion in its operations ! since some it inspires with courage, while others it deprives of all necessary confidence. I can only assure you, Madam, that the heart of man never conceived a stronger or sincerer passion than mine for you. If my reverence for you is my crime, I am sure it has been my sufficient punishment. I need not say my designs and motives are honourable. Who dare approach so much virtuous excellence with a supposition that such an assurance is necessary ? What my fortune is, is well known, and I am ready to stand the test of the strictest inquiry. Condescend, Madam, to embolden my respectful passion by one favourable line, that if what I here profess, and hope further to have an opportunity to assure you of, be found to be unquestionably true, then, I hope, my humble address will not quite be unacceptable to you ; and thus you will for ever oblige, dear Madam,

Your affectionate admirer,
and devoted servant.

LETTER XXIII.

The answer.

SIR,

IF modesty be the greatest glory in our sex, surely it cannot be blameworthy in yours. For my own part, I must think it the most amiable quality either man or woman can possess. Nor can there be, in my opinion, a true respect where there is not a diffidence of one's own merit, and an high opinion of the person's we esteem.

To say more on this occasion would little become me; to say less would look as if I knew not how to pay that regard to modest merit which modest merit only deserves.

You, Sir, best know your own heart; and if you are sincere and generous, will receive, as you ought, this frankness from, Sir,

Your humble servant.

LETTER XXIV.

A gentleman to a lady, professing an aversion to the tedious formality in courtship.

Dear Madam,

REMEMBER that one of the Ancients, in describing a youth in love, says, He has neither wisdom enough to speak, nor to hold his tongue. If this be a just description, the sincerity of my passion will admit of no dispute: and whenever in your company I behave like a fool, forget not that you are answerable for my incapacity. Having made bold to declare this much, I must presume to say, that a favourable reception of this will, I

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am certain, make me more worthy of your notice ; but your disdain would be what I believe myself incapable ever to surmount. To try by idle fallacies, and airy compliments, to prevail on your judgment, is a folly for any man to attempt who knows you. No, Madam ; your good sense and endowments have raised you far above the necessity of practising the mean artifices which prevail upon the less deserving of your sex : you are not to be so lightly deceived ; and, if you were, give me leave to say, I should not think you deserving of the trouble that would attend such an attempt.

This, I must own, is no fashionable letter from one who, I am sure, loves up to the greatest hero of romance : but as I would hope, that the happiness I sue for should be lasting, it is certainly most eligible to take no step to procure it but what will bear reflection ; for I should be happy to see you mine, even when we have both outlived the taste of every thing that has not virtue and reason to support it. I am, Madam, notwithstanding this unpolished address,

Your most respectful admirer,
And obedient humble servant.

L E T T E R XXV.

The lady's answer, encouraging a farther declaration:

S I R,

I AM very little in love with the fashionable methods of courtship : sincerity with me is preferable to compliments ; yet I see no reason why common decency should be discarded. There is something so odd in your style, that when I know

whether you are in jest or earnest I shall be less at a loss to answer you. Mean time, as there is abundant room for rising, rather than sinking, in your complaisance, you may possibly have chosen wisely to begin first at the lower. If this be the case, I know not what your succeeding addresses may produce; but I tell you fairly, that your present makes no great impression, yet, perhaps, as much as you intend on

Your humble servant.

LETTER XXVI.

The gentleman's reply, more openly declaring his passion.

Dear Madam,

NOW I have the hope of being not more despised for my acknowledged affection, I declare to you, with all the sincerity of a man of honour, that I have long had a most sincere passion for you; but I have seen gentlemen led such dances, when they have given up their affections to the lovely tyrants of their hearts, and could not help themselves, that I had no courage to begin an address in the usual forms, even to you, of whose good sense and generosity I, nevertheless, had a good opinion. You have favoured me with a few lines, which I most kindly thank you for. And I do assure you, Madam, if you will be pleased to encourage my honourable suit, you shall have so just an account of my circumstances and pretensions, as, I hope, will entitle me to your favour in the honourable light in which I profess myself, dear Madam,

Your most obliged and faithful admirer,

Be so good as to favour me with one line more to encourage my personal attendance, if not disagreeable.

L E T T E R XXVII.

The lady's answer to his reply, putting the matter on a sudden issue.

S I R,

AS we are both so well inclined to avoid unnecessary trouble, as well as unnecessary compliments, I think proper to acquaint you, that Mr Dunford, of Winchester, has the management of all my affairs; and is a man of such probity and honour, that I do nothing in any matters of consequence without him. I have no dislike to your person; and if you approve of what Mr Dunford can acquaint you with in relation to me, and I approve of his report in your favour, I shall be far from showing any gentleman that I have either an insolent or a sordid spirit, especially to such as do me the honour of their good opinion.

Andover.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

A facetious young lady to her aunt, ridiculing her serious lover.

Dear Aunt,

IAM much obliged to you for the kindness you intended me, in recommending Mr Richards to me for a husband: but I must be so free to tell you, he is a man no ways suited to my inclination. I despise, it is true, the idle rants of romance; but I

am inclinable to think there may be an extreme on the other side of the question.

The first time the honest man came to see me, in the way you was pleased to put into his head, was one Sunday after sermon time. He began with telling me, what I found at my finger-ends, that it was very cold; and politely blowed upon his. I immediately perceived that his passion for me could not keep him warm; and, in complaisance to your recommendation, conducted him to the fire-side. After he had pretty well rubbed heat into his hands, he stood up with his back to the fire, and, with his hands behind him, held up his coat, that he might be warm all over; and looking about him, asked, with the tranquillity of a man a twelvemonth married, and just come off a journey, how all friends did in the country? I said, I hoped very well; but would be glad to warm my fingers. Cry mercy, Madam!—And then he shuffled a little further from the fire; and after two or three hems, and a long pause—

I have heard, says he, a most excellent sermon just now. Dr Thomas is a fine man truly: Did you ever hear him, Madam? No, Sir; I generally go to my own parish-church. That is right, Madam, to be sure. What was your subject to-day? The Pharisee and the Publican, Sir. A very good one truly; Dr Thomas would have made fine work upon that subject. His text to-day was, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." A good subject, Sir; I doubt not but the Doctor made a fine discourse upon it. O ay, Madam, he cannot make a bad one upon any subject.

I rung for the tea-kettle; for thought I, we shall have all the heads of the sermon immediately.

At tea he gave me an account of all the reli.

gious societies unasked, and how many boys they had put out 'prentices, and girls they had taught to knit and sing psalms. To all which i gave a nod of approbation, and was just able to say, (for I began to be most horribly in the vapours), it was a very excellent charity. O ay, Madam, said he again, (for that is his word I find), a very excellent one truly; it is snatching so many brands out of the fire. You are a contributor, Sir, I doubt not. O ay, Madam, to be sure; every good man would contribute to such a worthy charity, to be sure. No doubt, Sir, a blessing attends upon all who promote so worthy a design. O ay, Madam, no doubt, as you say; I am sure I have found it; blessed be God! and then he twang'd his nose, and lifted up his eyes, as if in an ejaculation.

O, my good aunt, what a man is here for a husband! At last came the happy moment of his taking leave; for I would not ask him to stay supper; and, moreover, he talked of going to a lecture at St Helen's. And then (though I had an opportunity of saying little more than Yes, and No, all the time; for he took the vapours he had put me into for devotion, or gravity; at least I believe so) he pressed my hand, looked frightfully kind, and gave me to understand, as a mark of his favour, that if, upon further conversation and inquiry into my character, he should happen to like me as well as he did from my behaviour and person, why, truly, I need not fear, in time, being blessed with him for my husband!

This, my good aunt, may be a mighty safe way of travelling towards the land of matrimony, as far as I know; but I cannot help wishing for a

little more entertainment on our journey. I am willing to believe Mr Richards an honest man; but am, at the same time, afraid his religious turn of temper, however in itself commendable, would better suit with a woman who centers all desert in a solemn appearance, than with, dear aunt,

Your greatly obliged kinswoman,

LETTER XXIX.

Her aunt's answer, rebuking her ludicrous turn of mind.

Dear Child,

I AM sorry you think Mr Richards so unsuitable a lover. He is a serious, sober, good man; and, surely, when seriousness and sobriety make a necessary part of the duty of a good husband, a good father, and a good master of a family, those characters should not be the subject of ridicule, to persons of our sex especially, who would reap advantages from them. But he talks of the weather when he first sees you, it seems; and would you have had him directly fall upon the subject of love the moment he beheld you?

He visited you just after the sermon on a Sunday; and was it so unsuitable for him to let you see that the duty of the day had made proper impressions upon him?

His turn for promoting the religious societies, which you speak so slightly of, deserves more regard from every good person; for that same turn is a kind of security to a woman, that he who had a benevolent and religious heart could not make a bad man, or a bad husband. To put out poor boys

to 'prentice, to teach girls to sing psalms, would be with very few a subject for ridicule; for he that was so willing to provide for the children of others, would take still greater care for his own.

He gave you to understand, that if he liked your character on inquiry, as well as your person and behaviour, he should think himself very happy in such a wife: for that, I dare say, was more like his language, than what you put in his mouth: And, let me tell you, it would have been a much stranger speech, had so cautious and serious a man said, without a thorough knowledge of your character, that, at the first sight, he was over head and ears in love with you.

I think, allowing for the ridiculous turn your airy wit gives to this first visit, that, by your own account, he acted like a prudent, serious, and worthy man, as he is, and like one who thought flashy compliments beneath him in so serious an affair as this.

I think, dear niece, this not only a mighty safe way, as you call it, of travelling towards the land of matrimony, but to the land of happiness, with respect as well to the next world as this. And it is to be hoped, that the better entertainment you so much wish for on your journey may not lead you too much out of your way, and divert your mind from the principal view which you ought to have at your journey's end.

In short, I should rather have wished that you could bring your mind nearer to his standard than that he should bring down his to your level. And you would have found more satisfaction in it than you imagine, could you have brought yourself to a little more of that solemn appearance, which

you treat so lightly, and which, I think, in him is much more than mere appearance.

Upon the whole, dear niece, I am sorry that a woman of virtue and morals, as you are, should treat so ludicrously a serious and pious frame of mind, in an age wherein good examples are so rare, and so much wanted; though, at the same time, I am far from offering to prescribe to you in so arduous an affair as a husband; and wish you, and Mr Richards too, since you are so differently disposed, matched more suitable to each other's mind than you are likely to be together: For I am,

Your truly affectionate aunt.

LETTER XXX.

A sailor to his sweetheart.

My dear Peggy,

IF you think of me half so often as I do of you, it will be every hour; for you are never out of my thoughts; and when I am asleep, I constantly dream of my dear Peggy. I wear my half bit of gold always at my heart tied to a blue ribbon round my neck; for true blue, my dearest love, is a colour of colours to me. Where, my dearest, do you put your's? I hope you are careful of it: for it would be a bad omen to lose it.

I hope you hold in the same mind still, my dearest dear; for God will never bless you if you break the vows you have made to me. As to your ever faithful William, I would sooner have my heart torn from my breast than it should harbour a wish for any other woman besides my Peggy. Oh, my dearest love! you are the joy of my life! my

Yours truly
R

thoughts are all of you ; you are with me in all I do ; and my hopes and my wishes are only to be your's. God send it may be so !

Our captain talks of sailing soon for England ; and then, and then, my dearest Peggy ! — O how I rejoice, how my heart beats with delight, that makes me, I cannot tell how, when I think of arriving in England, and joining hands with my Peggy, as we have our hearts before, I hope ! I am sure I speak for one.

John Arthur, in the good ship Elisabeth, Captain Winterton, which is returning to England, as I hope we shall soon, promises to deliver this into your own dear hand ; and he will bring you, too, six bottles of citron water, as a token of my love. It is fit for the finest lady's taste, it is so good ; and is, what they say, ladies drink when they can get it.

John says, he will have one sweet kiss of my dearest Peggy for his care and pains. So let him, my best love ; for I am not of a jealous temper. I have a better opinion of my dearest than so. — But, oh ! that I was in his place ! — One kiss should not serve my turn, though I hope it may his. — Yet if he takes two, I will forgive him ; one for me, and one for himself. For I love John dearly ; and so you may well think. Well, what shall I say more ? — or rather, what shall I say next ? For I have an hundred things crowding in upon me when I write to my dearest ; and, alas ! one has so few opportunities ! but yet I must leave off ; for I have written to the bottom of my paper. Love then to all friends, and duty to both our mothers. Conclude me,

Your faithful lover till death.

LETTER XXXI.

Her answer.

Dear William,

FOR so I may call you, now we are sure, and so my mother says. This is to let you know that nothing shall prevail upon me to alter my promise made to you when we parted; with heavy hearts enough, that is true; and yet I had a little inkling given me, that Mr Alford's son, the carpenter, would be glad to make love to me: but do you think I would suffer it? no, indeed! for I doubt not your loyalty to me; and do you think I will not be as loyal to you?—To be sure I will. These sailors run such sad chances, said one, that you and I both know; they may return, and they may not. Well, I will trust in God for that, who has returned safe to his friends their dear Billy so many a time and often. They will have a mistress in every land they come to, say they. All are not such naughty men, said I; and I will trust Billy Oliver all the world over. For why cannot men be as faithful as women, tro'? And, for me, I am sure no love shall ever touch my heart but your's.

God send us a happy meeting! Let who will speak against sailors, they are the glory and the safeguard of the land. And what had become of Old England long ago but for them? I am sure the lazy good-for-nothing landlubbers would never have protected us from our cruel foes. So sailors are, and ever shall be, esteemed by me; and of all sailors my dear Billy Oliver. Believe this truth from,

Your faithful, &c.

P. S. I had this letter writ in readines to send you, as I had opportunity. And the captain's lady undertakes to send it with her's. That is very kind and condescending, is it not?

LETTER XXXII.

Miss Molly Smith to her cousin, giving her an account of a very remarkable instance of envy in one of her acquaintance, who lived in the city of York.

Dear Cousin,

I PROMISED, you know, to write to you, when I had any thing to tell you; and, as I think the following story very extraordinary, I was willing to keep my word.

Some time ago there came to settle in this city a lady, whose name is Difon. We all visited her: but she had so deep a melancholy, arising, as it appeared, from a settled state of ill health, that nothing we could do could afford her the least relief, or make her cheerful. In this condition she languished amongst us five years, still continuing to grow worse and worse.

We all grieved at her fate. Her flesh was withered away; her appetite decayed by degrees, till all food became nauseous to her sight; her strength failed her; her feet could not support her tottering body, lean and worn away as it was; and we hourly expected her death. When at last, she one day called her most intimate friends to her bedside, and, as well as she could, spoke to the following purpose: "I know you all pity me; but, alas! I am not so much the object of your pity as your contempt; for all my misery is of

“ my own seeking, and owing to the wickedness
“ of my own mind. I had two sisters, with whom
“ I was bred up; and I have all my lifetime been
“ unhappy for no other cause but for their suc-
“ cess in the world. When we were young, I
“ could neither eat nor sleep in peace when they
“ had either praise or pleasure. When we grew
“ up to be women, they were both soon married
“ much to their advantage and satisfaction. This
“ galled me to the heart; and though I had se-
“ veral good offers, yet, as I did not think them
“ in all respects equal to my sisters, I would not
“ accept them; and yet was inwardly vexed to
“ refuse them, for fear I should get no better. I
“ generally deliberated so long that I lost my lo-
“ vers, and then pined for that loss. I never
“ wanted for any thing; and was in a situation
“ in which I might have been happy if I pleased.
“ My sisters loved me very well; for I concealed,
“ as much as possible, from them my odious envy;
“ and yet, never did any poor wretch lead so mi-
“ serable a life as I have done; for every blessing
“ they enjoyed was a dagger to my heart. It is
“ this envy that has caused all my ill health, has
“ preyed upon my very vitals, and will now bring
“ me to my grave.”

In a few days after this confession she died; and her words and death made such a strong impression on my mind that I could not help sending you this relation; and begging you, my dear Sukey, to remember how careful we ought to be to curb in our minds the very first rising of a passion so detestable and so fatal, as this proved to poor Mrs Dison. I know I have no particular reason for giving you this caution; for I never saw any

thing in you but what deserved the love and esteem of,

Your ever affectionate cousin,
M. SMITH.

LETTER XXXIII.

The following letter is from an unknown lady to a young gentleman, on whom she had unfortunately fixed her affections : but as she never had it in her power to make any proper impressions on him, or a better opportunity of having her inclinations signified to him, she wrote as follows.

SIR,

I RELY on your goodness to redress and conceal the misfortunes I now labour under; but, oh! with what words shall I declare a passion which I blush to own? It is now a year and a half since first I saw, and (must I say?) loved you, and so long have I strove to forget you; but frequent sights of what I could not but admire have made my endeavours prove vain. I dare not subscribe to this letter, lest it should fall into hands that may possibly expose it; but if you, Sir, have any curiosity to desire or know who I am, I shall be in the park to-morrow exactly at two o'clock. I cannot but be under apprehensions, lest you should come more out of curiosity than compassion; but, however, that you may have some notion of me, if you do come, I will give you a short description of my person, which is tall and slender, my eyes and hair dark; perhaps you will think me vain when I tell you, that my person altogether is what the flattering world calls handsome; and as to my

fortune, I believe you will have no reason to find fault with it. I doubt you will think such a declaration as this, from a woman, ridiculous; but, you will consider, it is custom, not nature, that makes it so. My hand trembles so, while I write, that I believe you can hardly read it.

LETTER XXXIV.

The gentleman did not give himself the trouble to meet the lady, but took great pains to expose and ridicule her letter, though reproved for it by his acquaintance; which coming to the lady's knowledge, she sent him the following.

SIR,

YOU will the more easily pardon this second trouble from a slighted correspondent, when I assure you it shall be the last.

A passion like mine, violent enough to break through customary decorums, cannot be supposed to grow calm at once; but I hope I shall undergo no severer trials, or censures, than what I have done, by taking this opportunity of discharging the remains of a tendernefs, which I have so unfortunately and imprudently indulged. I would not complain of your unkindness and want of generosity in exposing my letter, because the man that is so unworthy of a woman's love is too inconsiderate for her resentment; but I can't forbear asking you, What could induce you to publish my letter, and so cruelly to sport with the misery of a person whom you knew nothing worse of, than that she entertained too good, too fond, an opinion of you?

For your own sake I am loath to speak it, but such conduct cannot be accounted for but from cruelty of mind, a vanity of temper, and an incurable defect of understanding. But whatsoever be the reason, amidst all my disappointments, I cannot but think myself happy in not subscribing my name; for you might, perhaps, have thought my name a fine trophy to grace your triumph after the conquest; and how great my confusion must have been, to be exposed to the scorn, or at least to the pity, of the world, I may guess from the mortifications I now feel from seeing my declarations and professions returned without success, and in being convinced, by the rash experiment I have made, that my affections have been placed without discretion. How ungenerous your behaviour hath been, I had rather you were told by the gentlemen, (who I hear universally condemn it), than force myself to say any thing severe. But although their kind sense of the affair must yield me some satisfaction under my present uneasiness, yet it furnishes me with a fresh evidence of my own weakness, in lavishing my esteem upon the person that least deserved it.

I hope the event will give me reason not only to forgive, but to thank you for this ill usage. That pretty face, which I have so often viewed with a mistaken admiration, I believe I shall be able to look on with an absolute indifference; and time, I am sensible, will abundantly convince me, that your features are all the poor amends which Nature hath made you for your want of understanding, and teach me to consider them only as a decent cover for the emptiness and deformity within. To cut off all hopes of your discovering

who I am, if you do not yet know, I have taken care to convey this by a different hand from the former letter; for which I am obliged to a friend, on whose goodness and fidelity I can safely rely. And it is my last request, that you would make this letter as public as you have done the former. If you do not, there are other copies ready to be dispersed; for though I utterly despair of ever showing it to yourself, yet I am very sure of making it plain to every one else that you are a coxcomb. Adieu.

LETTER XXXV.

Lydia to Harriot, a lady newly married.

My dear Harriot,

IF thou art she, but oh, how fallen! how changed! what an apostate! how lost to all that's gay and agreeable! To be married, I find, is to be buried alive; I can't conceive it more dismal to be shut up in a vault to converse with the shades of my ancestors, than to be carried down to an old manor-house in the country, and confined to the conversation of a sober husband and an awkward chambermaid. For variety, I suppose, you may entertain yourself with madam in the grogram gown, the spouse of your parish vicar, who has, by this time, I am sure, well furnished you with receipts for making salves and possets, distilling cordial waters, making syrups, and applying poultices.

Blessed solitude! I wish thee joy, my dear, of thy loved retirement, which, indeed, you would persuade me is very agreeable, and different enough

from what I have here described. But, child, I am afraid thy brains are a little disordered with romances and novels. After six months' marriage to hear thee talk of love, and paint the country scenes so softly, is a little extravagant; one would think you lived the lives of the sylvan deities, or roved among the walks of paradise like the first happy pair. But, prithee, leave these whimsies, and come to town, in order to live and talk like other mortals. However, as I am extremely interested in your reputation, I would willingly give you a little good advice at your first appearance under the character of a married woman. 'Tis a little insolent in me, perhaps, to advise a matron; but I am so afraid you'll make so silly a figure as a fond wife, that I cannot help warning you not to appear in any public place with your husband, and never to saunter about St James's Park together. If you presume to enter the Ring at Hyde Park together, you are ruined for ever; nor must you take the least notice of one another at the playhouse or opera, unless you would be laughed at as a very loving couple, most happily paired in the yoke of wedlock. I would recommend the example of an acquaintance of ours to your imitation: she is the most negligent and fashionable wife in the world; she is hardly ever seen in the same place with her husband; and if they happen to meet, you would think them perfect strangers. She never was heard to name him in his absence, and takes care he shall not be the subject of any discourse that she has a share in. I hope you will propose this lady as a pattern, though I am very much afraid you will be so silly to think Porcia, Sabina, &c. Roman wives, much brighter ex-

amples. I wish it may never come into your head to imitate those antiquated creatures so far as to come into public in the habit as well as the air of a Roman matron. You make already the entertainment at Mrs Modish's tea-table; she says she always thought you a discreet person, and qualified to manage a family with admirable prudence. She dies to see what demure and serious airs wedlock has given to you; but she says she shall never forgive your choice of so gallant a man as Bellmour, to transform him to a mere sober husband; it was unpardonable. You see, my dear, we all envy your happiness, and no person more than

Your humble servant,

LYDIA.

LETTER XXXVI.

Harriot's answer to the above.

BE not in pain, good Madam, for my appearance in town; I shall frequent no public places, or make any visits, where the character of a modest wife is ridiculous. As for your wild railery on matrimony, it is all hypocrisy. You and all the handsome young women of your acquaintance show themselves to no other purpose than to gain a conquest over some man of worth, in order to bestow your charms and fortune on him. There is no indecency in the confession, the design is modest and honourable, and all your affectation cannot disguise it.

I am married, and have no other concern but to please the man I love; he is the end of every care I have; if I dress, it is for him; if I read a

poem or a play, it is to qualify myself for a conversation agreeable to his taste: he is almost the end of my devotion; half my prayers are for his happiness. I love to talk of him, and never hear him named but with pleasure and emotion. I am your friend, and wish your happiness; but am sorry to see, by the air of your letter, that there are a set of women who are got into the common-place railery of every thing that is sober, decent, and proper. Matrimony and the clergy are the topics of people of little wit and no understanding. I own to you I have learned of the vicar's wife all you tax me with. She is a discreet, ingenious, pleasant, pious woman; I wish she had the handling of you and Mrs Modish; you would find, if you were too free with her, she would make you blush as much as if you had never been fine ladies. The vicar, Madam, is so kind as to visit my husband, and his agreeable conversation has brought him to enjoy many sober happy hours, when even I am shut out, and my dear husband is entertained only with his own thoughts. These things, dear Madam, will be lasting satisfactions, when the fine ladies, and the coxcombs by whom they form themselves, are irreparably ridiculous, ridiculous even in old age. I am,

Madam,

Your most humble servant,

HARRIOT.

LETTER XXXVII.

[The following pretty entertaining letter was written by our poet Waller to the Lady Sidney, on the marriage of her sister.]

To my Lady Lucy Sidney, upon the marriage of my Lady Dorothy to my Lord Spenser.

Madam,

IN the common joy at Penshurst *, I know none to whom complaints may come less unseasonable than to your Ladyship; the loss of a bedfellow being almost equal to that of a mistress; and therefore you ought at least to pardon, if you consent not to the imprecations of the deserted, which just Heaven, no doubt, will hear!

May my Lady Dorothy (if we may yet call her so) suffer as much, and have the like passion for this young Lord, whom she has preferred to the rest of mankind, as others have had for her; and may this love, before the year goes about, make her taste of the first curse imposed on womankind, the pains of becoming a mother! may her first-born be none of her own sex! nor so like her, but that he may resemble her Lord as much as herself!

May she, that always affected silence and retiredness, have the house filled with the noise and number of her children, and hereafter of her grandchildren! and then may she arrive at that great curse so much declined by fair ladies,—old age! May she live to be very old, and yet seem young; be told so by her glass, and have no aches to in-

* They were married, as we are informed, at Penshurst, July 11. 1639.

form her of the truth ! and when she shall appear to be mortal, may her Lord not mourn for her, but go hand in hand with her to that place where, we are told, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage ; that being there divorced, we may have all an equal interest in her again ! My revenge being immortal, I wish all this may also befall their posterity to the world's end, and afterwards.

To you, Madam, I wish all good things ; and that this loss may in good time be happily supplied with a more constant bedfellow of the other sex.

Madam, I humbly kiss your hand, and beg pardon for this trouble from your Ladyship's most humble

EDMUND WALLER.

LETTER XXXVIII.

[The wit and spirit which gave Lady Mary Wortley Montague, during her life, such rank in the polite world, was in no instance more happily displayed than in the following letter. We think the polite reader will be of opinion with us, that there is no letter in the collection lately published, and supposed to have been wrote by the same lady, where the life and spirit of the writer is to be more admired, or the sentiments more approved.]

A letter from Lady Mary Wortley Montague, against a maxim of Mons. Rochefoucault's, " That marriages are convenient, but never delightful."

IT appears very bold in me to attempt to destroy a maxim established by so celebrated a genius

as *Monf. de Rochefoucault*, and implicitly received by a nation which calls itself the only perfectly polite in the world, and which has, for so long a time, given laws of gallantry to all Europe.

But, full of the ardour which the truth inspires, I dare to advance the contrary, and to assert boldly, that it is marriage-love only that can be delightful to a good mind.

We cannot taste the sweets of perfect love but in a well-suited marriage. Nothing so much distinguishes a little mind as to stop at words. What signifies that custom (for which we see very good reasons) of making the name of husband and wife ridiculous? A husband signifies, in the general interpretation, a jealous mortal, a quarrelsome tyrant, or a good sort of fool, on whom we may impose any thing; a wife is a domestic dæmon, given to this poor man to deceive and torment him. The conduct of the generality of people sufficiently justifies these two characters. But I say again, what signify words? A well-regulated marriage is not like those of ambition and interest: it is two lovers who live together. Let a priest pronounce certain words, let an attorney sign certain papers; I look upon these preparations as a lover does on a ladder of cords that he fixes to the window of his mistress.

I know there are some people of false delicacy, who maintain that the pleasures of love are only due to difficulties and dangers. They say very wittily the rose would not be the rose without thorns, and a thousand other trifles of that nature, which make so little impression on my mind, that I am persuaded, was I a lover, the fear of hurting her I loved would make me unhappy, if the posses-

sion was accompanied with dangers to her. The life of married lovers is very different; they pass it in a chain of mutual obligations and marks of benevolence, and have the pleasure of forming the entire happiness of the object beloved; in which point I place perfect enjoyment.

The most trifling cares of economy become noble and delicate when they are heightened by sentiments of tenderness. To furnish a room is no longer furnishing a room, it is ornamenting the place where I expect my lover; to order a supper is not simply giving orders to a cook, it is amusing myself in regaling him I love. These necessary occupations, regarded in this light by a lover, are pleasures infinitely more sensible and lively than cards and public places, which make the happiness of the multitude incapable of true pleasure.—A passion happy and contented softens every movement of the soul, and gilds each object that we look on.

To a happy lover, (I mean one married to his mistress), if he has any employment, the fatigues of the camp, the embarrassments of a court, every thing becomes agreeable, when he can say to himself, it is to serve her I love. If Fortune is favourable, (for that does not depend on merit), and gives success to his undertaking, all the advantages he receives are offerings due to her charms; and he finds, in the success of his ambition, pleasure much more lively, and worthy a noble mind, than that of raising his fortune, or of being applauded by the public. He enjoys his glory, his rank, his riches, but as they regard her he loves; and it is her lover she hears praised when he gains the approbation of the parliament, the praises of the army, or the

favour of the prince. In misfortune, it is his consolation to retire to a person who feels his sorrow, and to say to himself in her arms, " My happiness does not depend on the caprice of Fortune; here is my assured asylum against all grief; your esteem makes me insensible to the injustice of a court, or the ingratitude of a master. I feel a sort of pleasure in the loss of my estate, as that misfortune gives me new proofs of your virtue and tenderness. How little desirable is grandeur to persons already happy? We have no need of flatterers or equipage; I reign in your heart, and I possess in your person all the delights of Nature." In short, there is no situation of which the melancholy may not be softened by the company of the person we love. Even an illness is not without its pleasures, when we are attended by one we love. I should never have done, was I to give you a detail of all the charms of an union in which we find, at once, all that flatters the senses in the most delicate and most extended pleasure; but I cannot conclude without mentioning the satisfaction of seeing each day increase the amiable pledges of our tender friendship, and the occupations of improving them according to their different sexes. We abandon ourselves to the tender instinct of Nature refined by love. We admire in the daughter the beauty of the mother, and respect in the son the appearances of understanding and natural probity which we esteem in the father. It is a pleasure, of which God himself (according to Moses) was sensible, when seeing what he had done, he found it good.

A propos of Moses, the first plan of happiness infinitely surpassed all others; and I cannot form

to myself an idea of Paradise more delightful than that state in which our first parents were placed. That did not last, because they did not know the world; (which is the true reason that there are so few love-matches happy.) Eve may be considered as a foolish child, and Adam as a man very little enlightened. When people of that sort meet, they may, perhaps, be amorous at first, but that cannot last. They form to themselves, in the violence of their passions, ideas above nature; a man thinks his mistress an angel, because she is handsome; a woman is enchanted with the merit of her lover, because he adores her. The first change of her complexion takes from him his adoration, and the husband ceasing to adore her, becomes hateful to her, who had no other foundation for her love; by degrees they are disgusted with one another, and, after the example of our first parents, they throw on each other the crime of their mutual weakness; afterwards coldness and contempt follow a great pace, and they believe they must hate each other because they are married; their smallest faults are magnified in each other's sight, and they are blinded to their mutual perfections. A commerce established upon passion can have no other attendants. A man when he marries his mistress ought to forget that she then appears adorable to him; to consider that she is but a simple mortal, subject to diseases, caprice, and ill humour. He must prepare his constancy to support the loss of her beauty, and collect a fund of complacency, which is necessary for the continual conversation of the person who is most agreeable, and the least unequal. The woman, on her side, must not expect a continuance of flatteries and obedience. She must dispose her-

self to obey agreeably; a science very difficult, and, of consequence, of great merit to a man capable of feeling. She must strive to heighten the charms of a mistress by the good sense and solidity of a friend. When two persons, prepossessed with sentiments so reasonable, are united by eternal ties, all nature smiles upon them, and the common objects become charming.

I esteem much the morals of the Turks, an ignorant people, but very polite, in my opinion. A gallant convicted of having debauched a married woman is looked upon by them with the same horror as an abandoned woman by us; he is sure never to make his fortune; and every one would be ashamed to give a considerable employment to a man suspected of being guilty of so enormous a crime.—What would they say in that moral nation, were they to see one of our anti-knight errants, who are always in pursuit of adventures to put innocent young women in distress, and to ruin the honour of women of fashion? who regard beauty, youth, rank, and virtue, but as so many spurs to incite their desire to ruin, and who place all their glory in appearing artful seducers, forgetting, that, with all their care, they can never attain but to the second rank, the devils having been long since in possession of the first?

I own, that our barbarous manners are so well calculated for the establishment of vice and misery, (which is inseparable from it), that they must have hearts and heads infinitely above the common to enjoy the felicity of a marriage such as I have described. Nature is so weak, and so given to change, that it is difficult to support the best-founded constancy amidst those many dissipations that our ri-

diculous customs have rendered inevitable. A husband who loves his wife is in pain to see her take the liberties which fashion allows; it appears hard to refuse them to her, and he finds himself obliged to conform himself to the polite manners of Europe; to see, every day, her hands a prey to every one who will take them; to hear her display to the whole world the charms of her wit; to show her neck in full day; to dress for balls and shows to attract admirers, and to listen to the idle flattery of a thousand fops. Can any man support his esteem for a creature so public? or, at least, does she not lose much of her merit?

To return to the oriental maxims, where the most beautiful women content themselves with limiting the power of their charms to him who has a right to enjoy them; they have too much honour to wish to make other men miserable, and are too sincere not to own they think themselves capable of exciting passion.

I remember a conversation I had with a lady of great quality at Constantinople, the most amiable woman I ever knew in my life, and for whom I had afterwards the most tender friendship; she owned ingeniously to me, that she was content with her husband. What libertines you Christian women are! (she said;) it is permitted to you to receive visits from as many men as you please; and your laws permit you, without limitation, the use of wine. I assured her she was very much misinformed; that it was true we received visits, but those visits were full of form and respect, and that it was a crime to hear a man talk of love, or for us to love any other than our husbands. "Your husbands are very good (said she, laughing) to

"content themselves with so limited a fidelity. Your eyes, your hands, your conversation, are for the public, and what do you pretend to reserve for them? Pardon me, my beautiful sultana," she added, embracing me, "I have all possible inclination to believe what you say, but you would impose upon me impossibilities. I know the amorous complexion of you infidels, I see you are ashamed of them, and I will never mention them to you more."

I found so much good sense and truth in all she said, that I could scarcely contradict her; and I owned at first, that she had reasons to prefer the morals of the Mussulmen to our ridiculous customs, which are surprisingly opposite to the severe maxims of Christianity. And, notwithstanding our foolish manners, I am of opinion, that a woman, determined to find her happiness in the love of her husband, must give up the extravagant desire of being admired by the public; and that a husband who loves his wife must deprive himself of the reputation of being a gallant at court. You see that I suppose two persons very extraordinary; it is not, then, very surprising such an union should be rare in a country where it is necessary, in order to be happy, to despise the established maxims.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

From a lady to a gentleman, who had obtained all her friends' consent, urging him to decline his suit to her.

SIR,

YOU have often importuned me to return marks of that consideration for you which you pro-

fess for me. As my parents, to whom I owe all duty, encourage your address, I wish I could. I am hardly treated by them because I cannot. What shall I do? Let me apply to you, Sir, for my relief, who have much good sense, and, I hope, generosity. Yes, Sir, let me bespeak your humanity to me, and justice to yourself, in this point; and that shall be all I will ask in my favour. I own you deserve a much better wife than ever I shall make; but yet, as love is not in one's own power, if I have the misfortune to know I cannot love you, will not justice to yourself, if not pity to me, oblige you to abandon your present purpose?

But as to myself, Sir, why should you make a poor creature unhappy in the displeasure of all her friends at present, and still more unhappy, if, to avoid that, she gives up her person, where she cannot bestow her heart? If you love me, as you profess, let me ask you, Sir, is it for my sake, or is it your own?—If for mine, how can it be, when I must be miserable, if I am forced to marry where I cannot love? If for your own, reflect, Sir, on the selfishness of your love, and judge if it deserves from me the return you wish.

How sadly does this love already operate! You love me so well that you make me miserable in the anger of my dearest friends!—Your love has already made them think me undutiful; and, instead of the fondness and endearment I used to be treated with by them, I meet with nothing but chidings, frowns, slights, and displeasure.

And what is this love of your's to do for me hereafter?—Why, hereafter, Sir, it will be turned into hatred, or indifference at least: for then, though I cannot give you my heart, I shall have

given you a title to it, and you will have a lawful claim to its allegiance. May it not then, nay, ought it not to be treated on the foot of a rebel, and expect punishment as such, instead of tenderness? Even were I to be treated with mercy, with goodness, with kindness, by you, and could not deserve or return it, what a wretch would your love make you! How would it involve me in the crying sin of ingratitude! How would it destroy my reputation in the world's eye, that the best of husbands had the worst of wives! — the kindest of men the unkindest of women!

Cease then, I beseech you, this hopeless, this cruel pursuit! — Make some worthier person happier in your addresses, that can be happy in them! — By this means, you will restore me (if you decline as of your own motion) to the condition you found me in, the love of my parents, and the esteem of my friends. If you really love me, this may be a hard task, but it will be a most generous one. — And there is some reason to expect it; for who that truly loves wishes to make the object of his love miserable? This must I be, if you persist in your addresses; and I shall know by your conduct, on occasion of this uncommon request, how to consider it, and in what light to place you, either as the most generous or the most ungenerous of men. Mean time I am, Sir, most heartily, though I cannot be what you would have me,

Your wellwisher, and humble servant.

LETTER XL.

The gentleman's answer to the lady's uncommon request.

Dear Madam,

I AM exceedingly concerned that I cannot be as acceptable to you as I have the good fortune to find myself to your honoured parents. If, Madam, I had reason to think it was owing to your prepossession in some happier man's favour, I should utterly despair of it, and should really think it would be unjust to myself, and ungenerous to you, to continue my address. As therefore you have, by your appeal to me, in so uncommon a way, endeavoured to make me a party against myself, and I have shown so much regard to you as to be willing to oblige you as far as I can, may I not hope the favour of you to declare generously, whether I owe my unhappiness to such a prepossession, and whether your heart is given to some other? If this be the case, you shall find all you wish on my part; and I shall take a pride to plead against myself, let me suffer ever so much by it, to your father and mother; but if not, and you have taken any other disgusts to my person or behaviour, that there may be hope my utmost affection and assiduity, or a contrary conduct, may, in time, get the better of, let me implore you to permit me still to continue my zealous respects to you; for this I will say, that there is not a man in the world who can address you with a sincerer and more ardent flame, than, dear Madam, your affectionate admirer, and humble servant.

LETTER XLI.

The lady's reply, in case of a prepossession.

SIR,

I THANK you for your kind assurance, that you will befriend me in the manner I wish; and I think I owe it to your generosity to declare, there is a person in the world, that, might I be left to my own choice, I should prefer to all other men. To this, Sir, it is owing that your address cannot meet with the return it might otherwise deserve from me. Yet are things so circumstanced, that while my friends prefer you, and know nothing of the other, I should find it very difficult to obtain their consents. But your generous discontinuance, without giving them the true reason for it, will lay an obligation, greater than I can express, on

Your most humble servant,

LETTER XLII.

The lady's reply, in case of no prepossession, or that she chuses not to avow it.

SIR,

I AM sorry to say that my disapprobation of your address is insuperable.—Yet I cannot but think myself beholden to you for the generosity of your answer to my earnest request. I must beg you, Sir, to give over your application; but how can I say, while I cannot help being of this mind, that it is, or is not, owing to a prepossession; when you declare, that in the one instance (and that is very generous too) you will oblige me, but in the other

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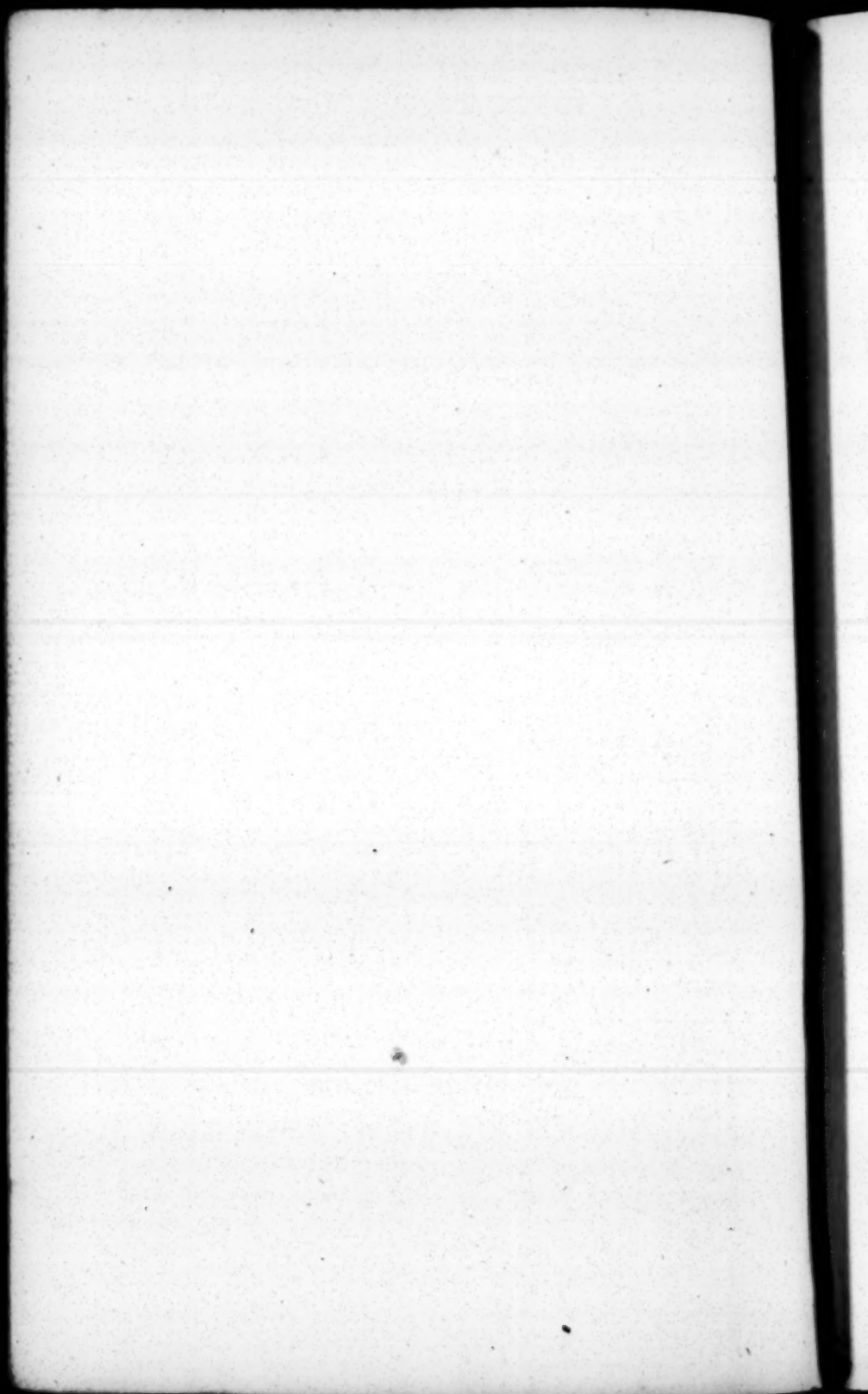
you will not? If I cannot return love for love, be the motive what it will, pray, Sir, for your own sake, as well as mine, discontinue your address.— In case of prepossession, you say you can, and you will oblige me. Let my unworthiness, Sir, have the same effect upon you as if that prepossession were to be avowed. This will inspire me with a gratitude that will always make me

Your most obliged servant.

THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART THIRD.

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THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART III.

Familiar LETTERS of Advice and Instruction,
&c. in many concerns of life.

LETTER I.

A letter from Judge Hale, Lord Chief Justice of England, to his children, on the serious observance of the Lord's day, (commonly called Sunday), when he was on a journey, which well deserves our attention.

I AM now come well to —, from whence I intend to write something to you on the observance of the Lord's day; and this I do for these reasons; *1st*, Because it has pleased God to cast my lot so, that I am to rest at this place on this day, and the consideration therefore of that duty is proper for me and you, *viz.* the work fit for that day. *2dly*, Because I have, by long and sound experience, found, that the due observance of that day, and the duties of it, has been of singular comfort and advantage to me; and I doubt not but it will prove so to you. God Almighty is the Lord of our time, and lends it us; and it is but just we should consecrate this part of that time to him; for I have

found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duty of this day has ever had joined to it a blessing on the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun has been blessed and prosperous to me. On the other side, when I have been negligent of the duty of this day, the rest of the week has been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes the week following by the manner of my passing this day; and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience.

L E T T E R II.

The Lord of Strafford to his son, just before his Lordship's execution.

My dearest Will,

THESE are the last lines that you are to receive from a father that tenderly loves you. I wish there was a greater leisure to impart my mind unto you; but our merciful God will supply all things by his grace, and will guide and protect you in all your ways; to whose infinite goodness I bequeath you; and therefore be not discouraged, but serve him, and trust in him, and he will preserve and prosper you in all things. Be sure you give all respects to my wife, that hath ever had a great love unto you, and therefore it will be well becoming you. Never be wanting in your love and care to your sisters, but let them ever be most dear unto you; for this will give others cause to esteem and respect you for it, and is a duty that

you owe them in the memory of your excellent mother and myself. Therefore your care and affection to them must be the very same that you are to have of yourself; and the like regard must you have to your youngest sister; for indeed you owe it her also, both for her father and mother's sake. Sweet Will, be careful to take the advice of those friends, who are, by me, desired to advise you for your education. Serve God diligently morning and evening, and recommend yourself unto him, and have him before your eyes in all your ways. With patience hear the instructions of those friends I leave with you, and diligently follow their counsel. For, till you come by time to have experience in the world, it will be far more safe to trust to their judgment than your own. Lose not the time of your youth, but gather those seeds of virtue and knowledge which may be of use to yourself, and comfort to your friends, for the rest of your life. And that this may be the better effected, attend thereto with patience, and be sure to correct and refrain yourself from anger. Suffer not sorrow to cast you down, but with cheerfulness and good courage go on the race you have to run in all sobriety and truth. Be sure with an hallowed care to have respect to all the commandments of God, and give not yourself to neglect them in the least thing, lest, by degrees, you come to forget them in the greatest; for the heart of man is deceitful above all things. And in all your duties and devotions towards God, rather perform them joyfully than pensively; for God loves a cheerful giver. For your religion, let it be directed according to that which shall be taught by those who are in God's church, the pro-

per teachers thereof, rather than that you either fancy one to yourself, or be led by men that are singular in their own opinion, and delight to go ways of their own finding out: for you will certainly find soberness and truth in the one, and much unsteadiness and vanity in the other. The King, I trust, will deal graciously with you: restore you those honours, and that fortune, which a distempered time hath deprived you of, together with the life of your father; which I rather advise might be by a new gift and creation from himself than by any other means, to the end you may pay the thanks to him, without having obligations to any other. Be sure to avoid, as much as you can, to inquire after those that have been sharp in their judgments toward me, and I charge you never to suffer thoughts of revenge to enter into your heart; but be careful to be informed who were my friends in this prosecution, and, to them apply yourself to make them your friends also; and on such you may rely, and bestow much of your conversation among them. And God Almighty, of his infinite goodness, bless you and your children's children: and his same goodness bless your sisters in like manner; perfect you in every good work, and give you a right understanding in all things. Amen.

Your most loving father,

T. WENTWORTH.

LETTER III.

From a gentleman at Lisbon, immediately after the earthquake, to his son in London.

My dear Son,

ERE you receive this from your unhappy father, you will have heard of the destruction of this place, and of the calamitous situation of its few remaining miserable inhabitants. God, in his infinite mercy, protect us! All that you have heard will fall short of what I have seen; for no words have energy sufficient to convey an idea of a scene so amazingly dreadful.—Your poor mother is no more!—ask me not for your sisters!—and, as for myself, I am a vagabond, and condemned to seek my bread from those who can ill afford to feed me. But “the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.”—I am satisfied.—All may be for the best, and our friends are, I doubt not, removed to a more permanent city, whose foundations are not to be shaken, and where sorrow is no more. Let us, my dear child, prepare to follow them; and that we may do so, let us live here that we may fear no dissolution, nor dread what may happen hereafter. Let us always be prepared for the worst, and not depend on a deathbed repentance; for you see we have not a moment that we can call our own. St AUSTIN says, “We read of one man who was saved at the last hour, that none may despair; and of but one, that none may presume.” How unsafe, how foolish, therefore, is it to put off that until to-morrow, which is so essentially necessary to be done to-

day! To-morrow may never come!—Oh think of that! you may be snatched away in an instant, as thousands here have been, for there is no withstanding the arm of the Almighty: No! the attempt would be vain, would be presumptuous, would be impious: and you will find, my dear son, (I hope not too late) that the only security against accidents of this sort is the leading a religious and good life. I am

Your truly affectionate father.

LETTER IV.

To Amelia, with a gold thimble.

Sept. 28, 1764

CAN you believe me, my little friend, when I say that the present I now make you may be of more service to you in the course of your life than the ring of Gyges, and that I deserve your thanks as much as if I had given you the cap of Fortunatus. Perhaps you may have heard only of the latter, I will explain to you the virtues of the ring. This, my little fair, would render you invisible whenever you chose to be so; you might then range through the apartments of your play-fellows unseen, play ten thousand little tricks, which at present is not in your power to do; but, indeed, the greatest advantages of the ring are reserved for another age, when you may be present with your lover, and discover the true sentiments of his heart, perplex your rival, hide her Brussels and her jewels the night before a ball, and torment her with all the arts of ingenious mischief. These are advantages which at present, perhaps,

may not tempt you ; the cap, as I can easily imagine, to be rather the object of your wishes ; but tell me, you say, how this thimble can be of so infinite service ?

At your age, my little friend, employment is of the utmost use : to be busy, if it be not learning to be virtuous, will at least protect you from the contrary impressions. Whilst your imagination is employed how best to shade a rose, or your fancy determines the colours of the various parts of your work, vanity will scarce have time to whisper in your ear, that you have more beauty than another, or inspire you with too early a love of gaiety and pleasure.

When you have lived to that age in which your reason shall be ripened, you will, perhaps, perceive, that those little follies which your sex are guilty of proceed from a fault in their education, and that idleness is the parent of vice. Thus then, in the early years of life, whilst you place the thimble on your finger, you are guarding your bosom against the approach of foibles which might banish those from your society, who were attracted by the charms of your person.

Another of its virtues, which, in all probability, you can never want to experience, is, that, if properly applied, it contains a charm against the calamities of poverty. I have known many a female, who, by its assistance, has supported herself with decency, and felt the pleasures of living without depending on the beneficence of others.

A few years hence, when the youth, whom your eyes have wounded, shall beg your acceptance of some trifle in the warmest terms imaginable, he will intreat you to preserve it ; but I, on the con-

trary, shall desire you to be frequent in the use of this, and to wear it out for my sake. I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

On the vicissitudes of human life.

REMEMBER, my son, that human life is the journey of a day. We rise in the morning of youth, full of vigour, and full of expectation; we set forward with spirit and hope, with gaiety and with diligence, and travel on a while, in the straight road of piety, towards the mansions of rest. In a short time we remit our fervour, and endeavour to find some mitigation of our duty, and some more easy means of obtaining the same end. We then relax our vigour, and resolve no longer to be terrified with crimes at a distance, but rely upon our own constancy, and venture to approach what we resolve never to touch. We thus enter the bowers of Ease, and repose in the shades of Security. Here the heart softens, and vigilance subsides: we are then willing to inquire whether another advance cannot be made, and whether we may not, at least, turn our eyes upon the gardens of Pleasure. We approach them with scruple and hesitation; we enter them, but enter timorous and trembling, and always hope to pass through them without losing the road of virtue, which we, for a while, keep in our sight, and to which we propose to return. But temptation succeeds temptation, and one compliance prepares us for another; we, in time, lose the happiness of innocence, and solace our disquiet with sensual gratifications. By degrees we let fall the

remembrance of our original intention, and quit the only adequate object of rational desire. We entangle ourselves in business, immerge ourselves in luxury, and rove through the labyrinths of inconstancy, till the darkness of old age begins to invade us, and disease and anxiety obstruct our way. We then look back upon our lives with horror, with sorrow, with repentance; and wish, but too often vainly wish, that we had not forsaken the ways of virtue. Happy are they, my son, who learn not to despair, but shall remember, that though the day is past, and their strength is wasted, there yet remains one effort to be made; that reformation is never hopeless, nor sincere endeavours ever unassisted; that the wanderer may at length return after all his errors; and that he who implores strength and courage from above shall find danger and difficulty give way before him.

LETTER VI.

From a father to his son, on his admission into the university.

My dear Son,

YOU are now going into the wide world. Every step you take is attended with danger, and requires caution. My eye is upon you no longer, and the vigilance of governors, and the care of tutors, cannot follow you every where. Few will have concern or affection enough to advise you faithfully. Your conduct must be a good deal regulated by your own reflections. The only secure paths are those of religion and virtue, in which it will not be difficult for you to walk, if you live

agreeably to that simplicity of life, which the rules of academical societies prescribe. Mix not intemperance with your growing years, nor treasure up infirmities against an age the fittest for employment. You have received health from your parents, and you owe it to your children. Be careful in the choice of your company; pay civility to all; have friendship with few; not too quickly with any. An idle companion will corrupt and disgrace you while you associate with him, and asperse and expose you when you shall shake him off. In this, be advised by those whom I trust to do all good offices for you. Whenever you find yourself with persons of superior age, or quality, or station, or endowments, pay a deference to them; so much is due to their experience and character. Modesty is the most amiable virtue, especially in a young man who professes himself a learner. Possibly, in a large society, you may meet with some bold young men who will think to arrogate to themselves a value amongst their ill-bred companions, by daring to say and do abusive things to their governors; but do not you imitate such examples; for prudence is true magnanimity. A brave mind is seen in persevering through the difficulties of a virtuous course; in the conquest of irregular appetites and passions, and in scorning to do any thing that is mean or base. Have nothing to do with politics, which when you shall have studied all your life, you will not have found out what will hereafter be the humours, or resentments, or private interests, or public views, of men in power: A study, which, as it is generally directed, rather leads from virtue, is foreign to your present purpose, and in

which, if you could really have any skill, at your age it would seem to be affected. Take the proper advantages of living in a society. Observe the different tempers and dispositions of men; shun their vices, imitate their virtues, make use of their learning, and let the many eyes that are upon you, the consciousness of your duty, and the indignation to be insignificant, raise an emulation in you to excel in some kind of art or knowledge that may hereafter be useful to the public. From the moment of your entrance take care of your reputation. Let not one exercise go out of your hands that hath not employed your utmost diligence. Notwithstanding the affection I have for you, I shall not be able to do you the service I desire, unless you assist me with your character. And, in all doubtful cases, let not your father, who loves you best, and your governors, who are well able to direct you, be the only friends that you will not consult.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

To Demetrius, with a present of fruit, on early rising.

July 28 1766.

YOU would have received a much larger quantity of fruit, but, to say the truth, my band of musicians have made bold with more of it this summer than usual; however, when I consider that it is the only wages I pay them, I am no otherwise displeased with it, than as it prevents me from obliging my friends in town as I could wish.

My Lucinda, you know, is extremely fond of

birds, and she says it would be cruel to deprive them of their liberty, when we can be entertained with their songs without it ; to encourage then their residence among us, they are not denied a great share of the productions of my garden.

We were this morning at six o'clock in our garden; an hour which you are totally unacquainted with, and which, notwithstanding, affords the noblest scene which a human creature can be present at.

The sun, my Demetrius, was just risen above the horizon, and all the eastern sky was tinged with blushes ; the zephyrs, as they passed, were fraught with fragrance from the morning flowers, and the feathered songsters were waked to their respective parts, in their morning hymn to the Author of nature.

Whilst my Lucinda and I were walking, like a fond old-fashioned couple, arm in arm, I could not but recollect that part of the Paradise Lost, where Milton has described our first parents as rising to their labours, and addressing their grateful orisons to the bounteous Father of every mercy.

There is, indeed, something which, at this time, inspires us with gratitude to our Maker, and produces sentiments in almost every bosom, like those which are given to Adam :

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair : thyself how wond'rous then !
Unspeakable, who first above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works, yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.

There is likewise something which must create a grateful sense of our obligation to Heaven when

we wake again to life, with the blessing of health, and recollect that many have passed the night in all the anguish of pain and disease. As for myself, I should retire to sleep with no little anxiety, if I were not assured that we are protected in those hours by our Maker, when we are not conscious of our own existence. There cannot surely be a more comfortable reflection than being convinced that a Power who commands and directs all nature is our guard, without whose knowledge no action is committed, nor even the most secret thought can arise.

With this confidence of security the good man commits himself to the arms of Sleep, where all besides must fear it ; and feels serenity, where every other breast must be discomposed.

The usual serenity of the morning, which inspired every warbler with cheerfulness, detained us in the garden till our little boy came running to inform us that the breakfast waited.

"Is it not extremely absurd," said Lucinda, as we returned, "for mankind to complain of the short duration of their lives, when they even refuse to live a number of hours which Providence has bestowed upon them ? How many can we recollect amongst our acquaintance who have been lost to every joy this morning has afforded us, and who may, notwithstanding, before night, assert, that the age, which men in general attain to, serves only to conduct them to a superficial knowledge of the sciences, or that old age approaches almost as soon as we begin to live !"

Such indeed is frequently the language of human creatures, who lose the most valuable parts of

every day. Such, too, I have heard from your mouth; but then indeed you rise—by eleven.

Lucinda and myself, who are great advocates for early hours, want much to try whether we cannot reform you, as we have already done Leontes; and should therefore rejoice to see you amongst us; there is then some probability of your seeing the sun rise, which I sincerely believe you have not done for many years, and which is one of the most pleasing scenes upon the theatre of Nature.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

To Lucinda, on the happiness of a domestic matrimonial life.

July 5, 1764.

AFTER so many years which we have passed, my Lucinda, almost without separation, one would naturally imagine that the few days' absence I have known should not be displeasing: and yet, believe me, I am already tired of the town, and am preparing to leave it with the utmost expedition, to return to domestic joys.

When I reflect on my own disposition, I am greatly thankful to Providence, that the same dislike for public pleasures has always prevailed in Lucinda as myself, and that we have been actuated by the same inclinations during the tenour of our lives.

Though I own myself in general but little fond of the town, yet I never fail of seeing objects in it which remind me of my own felicity, and increase

the love I bear to you. Alas! my dear, the fashionable tenour of matrimonial lives is so little suited to my turn of mind, that I must have been wretched with what is now called a very good wife. I could by no means have endured to see the heart of the woman I loved entirely devoted to pleasure, nor have ever been content to share it with the king of trumps.

It is, however, happy for mankind that the same delicacy does not universally prevail, as there are now many couple who are thought to be happy, because the wife has never transgressed the bounds of virtue, nor the husband treated her with language which he would be ashamed to use to a stranger. Their amusements are distinct from each other; they know nothing of that heart-felt joy which arises from being with those they love, secluded from every eye, and breathing the sweets of the balmy evening. Their only care is refining those pleasures which repetition has rendered dull, and inventing new arts to pass the tedious day, which, notwithstanding their endeavours, affords some hours in which that most impertinent of all companions, called *self*, never fails of intrusion.

There are many women in the world, I believe, to whom I might have made a good husband; but I do not recollect any one but my Lucinda who could have made me a happy one. How greatly then am I indebted to thy amiable disposition and virtues, since indifference and contempt are to be incompatible in the marriage state? To Heaven, likewise, my sincerest thanks are due, for preserving its best and most valuable gifts to bless my life. For, as Milton elegantly expresses it,

With thee conversing I forget all time,
 All seasons and their change, all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,
 With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
 After soft show'rs; and sweet the coming on
 Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird; and this fair moon,
 And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
 But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
 On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
 Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
 Nor grateful Evening mild; nor silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,
 Or glittering star-light, without thee is sweet.

Having once begun those beautiful lines of my Lucinda's favourite poet, I found it impossible to break off sooner; nay, I was pleased to be able to express so elegantly the language of my heart.

Aranthes, who is just come in, and has looked over my shoulder, upon seeing so much poetry, cried out, "Very fine, truly, I shall take the first opportunity to inform Lucinda of this, I assure you." "If you have any thing," I replied, "to acquaint Lucinda with, you may make use of me, for I am now writing to her." "How is this?" says Arantes, "what, larding your letters with poetry after more than twenty years' marriage! I concluded you were addressing some other fair one, and endeavouring to soften her inexorable heart by the Muse's assistance. But come with me to Lady —'s. Not a word, however, of Lucinda all night; to be seen with such an old-fashioned creature as you would spoil my reputa-

tion entirely, if your character should once be known."

You know Arantes, my Lucinda, extremely well, and will perceive by this that he is still the same man as ever. He desires me to apologize for his taking me from you, as he calls it, and at the same time to send you his compliments. My blessing to the children, whom I shall make happy by some little presents at my return; to thee, my love, I shall bring a heart more truly thine than ever, more intimately acquainted with thy virtues, and more perfectly convinced of its own felicity. Believe me, &c.

LETTER IX.

To Cleanthes, on friendship, age, and death.

Nov. 15, 1765.

IT is no small alleviation to that anxiety which the loss of a friend produces, to reflect that the same virtues which procured him our esteem will likewise intitle him to eternal happiness. This consolation I received upon closing the eyes of Aristus, the last and most melancholy office which Friendship can perform.

At length, my Cleanthes, that friendship, which we once divided, is now confined to ourselves. We have seen those who advanced with us along the vale of life sink into the grave, and have lived to be the only links of the chain of friendship which we helped to constitute at our entrance into the world. We have together, in the hours of youth, looked back and despised the toys of infancy; in our manhood we have smiled at the pleasures of

our youth ; and are now come to that age in which we look back on all alike, and consider every prospect that terminates on this side the grave as beneath our notice or regard.

At this season of life, one of the most considerable pleasures which remain to human nature is the recollection of the moments which are past. Now, whilst I write to my Cleanthes, I recall with satisfaction the time in which we were induced, by a parity of sentiments, to form the social connection, and the steady union in which we have passed from that hour to the present. The time approaches which must put a period to our friendship ; none hope that Providence will extend their lives to an unusual length but those who fear to die ; as for ourselves, we have reached that age which few are born to attain, and which, in the language of an admired writer, requires a great deal of Providence to produce. I flatter myself that our days have been so spent that we have no reason to tremble at the thought of our last, nor embitter the remaining part of our life with apprehension for the inevitable hour to come.

We have lent the tear of Pity to distress, and alleviated the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures ; we have neither indulged our passions, nor neglected the praise we owe to the Author of our mercies. Why, therefore, should we tremble ? We leave a world whose pleasures we are no longer capable of possessing ; we have passed through its enjoyments, and have found them vain ; we leave it for the happiest of states : and yet the tender tie of parents holds us ; we must leave those whom Nature obliges us to love : yet let us remember that we leave them to the care of a divine Providence,

and be thankful that we were not called whilst their minds were yet unformed, or we had conducted them from the budding to the bloom of reason.

If at any time a kind of wish arises, which would defer the hour that Heaven has allotted for my last, it is when I am surrounded by my family, and observe the looks of tenderness which they gratefully bestow on me; yet sometimes their being present has the opposite effect, and I am apprehensive lest the moment should not arrive till I mourn the loss of a child.

I know not that any thing would give more considerable amusement than our reviewing together our past lives, and recollecting the dangers we have passed from the storms of our passions, when now time has lulled them to rest. It would not be unentertaining, I imagine, to collect the various opinions and ideas we have had of the same object, and mark the progress of the human mind thro' the different stages of life. Cleanthes, therefore, who enjoys the blessing of health in a more eminent degree than his friend, will hasten to see and give him the greatest satisfaction he can possibly know.

I write this from the grotto which Lucinda's fancy decorated, and where we have passed so many happy hours. Providence has taken care to wean us from the love of life by degrees. Scarce have we reached the ripened age of manhood: before we have more friends in the grave than surviving; and from that moment, which is almost the first of serious reflection, we begin to perceive the vanity of human happiness. It was the will of Heaven that I should mourn the loss of my Lu-

cinda, and feel the pang of separation, yet not till we had grown old in love, and sweetened the greatest part of our lives with connubial happiness. Since the retrospect part of our lives presents us with nothing which should terrify our imagination, let us pass the remaining days which Heaven shall allot us in calm serenity, and in resignation to the Divine will.

Whenever the destined hour shall come, my Cleanthes, may we sink contented from the world, and in the perfect assurance of eternal happiness!

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

A letter from Bishop Atterbury to his son Obadiah, at Christ-church College in Oxford.

[Containing some useful hints in regard to writing letters.]

Dear Obby,

I THANK you for your letter, because there are manifest signs in it of your endeavouring to excel yourself, and, of consequence, to please me. You have succeeded in both respects, and will always succeed, if you think it worth your while to consider what you write, and to whom; and let nothing, though of a trifling nature, pass through your pen negligently; get but the way of writing correctly and justly; time and use will teach you to write readily afterwards; not but that too much care may give a stiffness to your style, which ought in all letters, by all means, to be avoided; the turn of them should be always natural and easy, for they are an image of private

and familiar conversation. I mention this with respect to the four or five lines of your's, which have an air of poetry, and do, therefore, naturally resolve themselves into blank verses. I send you your letter again, that yourself may now make the same observation. But you took the hint of that thought from a poem; and it is no wonder, therefore, that you heightened the phrase a little when you were expressing it. The rest is as it should be; and, particularly, there is an air of duty and sincerity, which, if it comes from your heart, is the most acceptable present you can make me. With these good qualities an incorrect letter would please me, and without them the finest thoughts and language will make no lasting impression on me. The great Being says, you know,—"My son, give me thy heart;" implying, that without it all other gifts signify nothing. Let me conjure you, therefore, never to say any thing, either in a letter, or common conversation, that you do not think; but always to let your mind and your words go together on the most trivial occasions. Shelter not the least degree of insincerity under the notion of a compliment, which, as far as it deserves to be practised by a man of probity, is only the most civil and obliging way of saying what you really mean; and whoever employs it otherwise throws away truth for breeding: I need not tell you how little this character gets by such an exchange.

I say not this as if I suspected that in any part of your letter you intended to write what was proper without any regard to what was true; for I am resolved to believe that you were in earnest from

the beginning to the end of it, as much as I am,
when I tell you that I am

Your loving father, &c.

LETTER XI.

*From a young lady in one of the Canary Islands to
her sister in England, whom she had never seen;
containing a pressing invitation to her to come
over, and describing the beauties of the place, in
order to prevail on her.*

MUST we for ever, my dear sister, converse only at this unhappy distance?—Are we born of the same parents, to be eternal aliens to each other?—I have been told wonders of your wit, ingenuity, and good nature.—Must strangers, or at least very distant kindred, reap all the benefits of these amiable qualities, while those who are nearest, and ought, methinks, to be dearest, mourn the want of it?—They say there is a secret sympathy between persons of the same blood, and I am sure I feel it; how is it then with you?—Have you never any of those yearnings, those longings, to see the daughter of your father and your mother, which so powerfully agitate me in my daily musings and my nightly dreams?—If not affection, pity should make you wish to be with a sister, who stands so much in need of your assistance. You know my father's great affairs suffer him seldom to be with his family. — Death has deprived me of my mother, and Devotion of her sister; but she forsakes me only to join herself to her Creator: you have no such plea. And as you are six years older than myself, and of a much superior under-

standing, it is a kind of duty in you to be with me, to correct the errors of my unexperienced youth, and form my mind by the model of your own.—Believe me, I would be most obedient to your instructions, and love the precepts for the teacher's sake.—What can withhold you from coming to a place where your presence is so ardently desired?—What can you find so pleasing to you in a kingdom rent with internal divisions?—where father against son, and brother against brother, maintain unnatural contest!—a kingdom, where pride, injustice, luxury, and profaneness, are almost universal, and religion become a reproach to the profession!—a kingdom, sinking by swift degrees into misery and contempt, yet infatuated so far as to dote on the cause of their undoing!—At least this is the account we have of it.—Can this be agreeable to a person of your nice and distinguishing taste!—O my dearest sister! listen to the dictates of reason, of duty, and of nature; all join to call you from that worse than Egypt into the land of Canaan.—Here Peace and Innocence go hand in hand, and all the Graces, all the Pleasures, wait upon their steps.—No foreign wars, no homebred jars, no envy, no distrust, disturb the soft serenity of these blissful seats, but all is harmony and love.—Eternal zephyrs watch our morning-walkings, bringing ten thousand odours on their wings, and tempt us to the groves from whence they spring.—In troops we wander thro' the jessamine lanes, or sit in orange bowers, where fruits, ripe and in blossom, charm our smell and taste.—Sometimes on mules we take short journeys to Teneriffe, and on the foot of that stupenduous mount recline on banks of roses um-

brella'd over with spreading myrtles:—then change the scene, and view the spacious vineyards, where huge alcoves of clustering grapes hang pendent over our heads.—Sometimes we roam thro' a long gallery of stately pines, whose loaded boughs present us every kind of fruit in one.—But there is no describing half the various sweets which Nature, with a lavish hand, pours on these isles, which justly have the name of *Fortunate!* nor (I flatter myself) will there be any need of farther arguments to bring you to us.—My father has just now informed me, that Captain *** carries his positive orders for your coming, and I may now rest in an assured hope of enjoying the happiness I so long and so earnestly have wished; yet I am craving still more.—I would fain, methinks, imagine, if I could, that with your obedience to our father, some little share of love for me was mingled, and that you will embark with the more readiness, by the thoughts that you will embrace one who has so tender an affection for you, and thinks it the greatest blessing to subscribe herself,

My dear sister,

Your most affectionate and

Most obedient servant,

MARIA BOYLE.

LETTER XII.

From Miss Middleton to Miss Pemberton, giving her the melancholy account of her sister's death.

Dear Miss Pemberton,

JUST as I was setting out for Worcestershire, in order to follow my sister, who, you know,

has been some time there, I received a letter from my aunt, acquainting me that she was taken ill last Friday, and died in two days after.—Yes, that lately so much admired, that splendid beauty, is now reduced to a cold lump of clay :—for ever closed are those once sparkling eyes ;—hushed is that voice which gave so much delight ;—those limbs which Art had ransacked to adorn, have now no other covering than a simple shroud, and in a few days will be confined within the narrow compass of a tomb.—Ah ! what is life !—what all the gaudy pride of youth, of pomp, of grandeur !—what the vain adoration of a flattering world !—Delusive pleasures, —fleeting nothings, how unworthy are you of the attention of a reasonable being !—You know the gay manner in which we have always lived, and will, no doubt, be surprised to find expressions of this kind fall from my pen ;—but, my dear Pemberton, hitherto my life has been a dream ; but I am now, thank Heaven, awake.—My sister's fate has roused me from my lethargy of mind, made me see the ends for which I was created, and reflect that there is no time to be lost for their accomplishment.—Who can assure me, that in an hour, a moment, I may not be as she is ?—And if so, oh ! how unfit, how unprepared, to make my audit at the great tribunal !—In what a strange stupidity have I passed fourteen or fifteen years ! (for those of my childhood are not to be reckoned.)—I always knew that death was the portion of mortality, yet never took the least care to arm against the terrors of it.—Whenever I went a little journey, I provided myself with all things necessary, yet have I got nothing ready for that long, last voyage, I must one day take into

another world.—What an infatuation, to be anxious for the minutest requisites for ease and pleasure, in a dwelling where I proposed to stay a few weeks, or months, perhaps, yet wholly regardless of what was wanting for making my felicity in an eternal situation! Reason, just kindled, shudders at the recollection of that endless train of follies I have been guilty of.—Well might the poor Berinthia feel all their force;—vain, gay, unthinking, as myself, I tremble at the bare imagination of those ideas which her last moments must inspire; for I now faithfully believe with Mr Waller, that,

“ Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
“ Who stand upon the threshold of the new.”

Whether it was the suddenness of her fate, or a letter she wrote to me not two hours before her death, I know not, that has made this alteration in me; but of this I am certain, that I can never enough acknowledge the goodness of that Divine Power, without whose assistance it could not have been brought about.

I shall make no apology for this melancholy epistle, because I am very sensible that whatever concern you may feel for my sister, it will be greatly alleviated by finding I am become, at last, a reasonable creature. I inclose you the letter she sent, to the end you may judge with what kind of sentiments she left this world.—Heaven has, I hope, accepted her contrition, and will enable me, as you will find she desires, to be more early in mine.

I am, dear Miss,

Your most afflicted humble servant,
MIDDLETON.

LETTER XIII.

Miss Middleton's letter to her sister, (inclosed in the foregoing,) wrote a few hours before her death, advising her not to defer making the necessary preparations for futurity.

My dear Sister,

BEFORE this can possibly reach you, the unchanging fiat will be passed upon me, and I shall be either happy or miserable for ever.—None about me pretend to flatter me with the hopes of seeing another morning.—Short space to accomplish the mighty work of eternal salvation! —Yet I cannot leave the world without admonishing,—without conjuring, you to be more early in preparing for that dreadful hour you are sure not to escape, and know not how shortly it may arrive.—We have had the same sort of education,—have lived in the same manner; and tho' accounted very like, have resembled each other more in our follies than our faces.—Oh! what a waste of time have we not both been guilty of! To dress well has been our study,—parade, equipage, and admiration, our ambition,—pleasure our avocation,—and the mode our god.—How often, alas! have I profan'd, in idle chat, that sacred name, by whose merits alone I have hopes to be forgiven? How often have I sat and heard his miracles and sufferings ridiculed by the false wits of the age, without feeling the least emotion at the blasphemy! —Nay, how often have I myself, because I heard others do so, called in question that futurity I now go to prove, and am already convinced of! One

moment, methinks I see the blissful seats of Paradise unveiled;—I hear ten thousand myriads of myriads of celestial forms tuning their golden harps to songs of praise to the unutterable name.—The next, a scene all black and gloomy spreads itself before me, whence issue nought but sobs, and groans, and horrid shrieks.—My fluctuating imagination varies the prospect, and involves me in a sad uncertainty of my eternal doom.—On one hand beckoning angels smile upon me, while, on the other, the furies stand prepared to seize my fleeting soul.—Methinks I dare not hope, nor will the Rev. Dr G**** suffer me to despair;—he comforts me with the promises in holy writ, which, to my shame, I was unacquainted with before; but now I feel them balm to my tormented conscience.—Dear, dear sister, I must bid you eternally adieu;—I have discharged my duty in giving you this warning. O! may my death, which you will shortly hear of, give it that weight I wish and pray for. You are the last object of my earthly cares:—I have now done with all below,—shall retire into myself, and devote the few moments allowed me to the penitence which alone can entitle me to a glorious immortality. I die

Your sincere friend,
and most affectionate and departing sister,
BERINTHIA.

LETTER XIV.

A letter to Miss W——, advising her to take care of her house, &c.

AS you are a tenant at will in a very handsome genteel house, and are now capable of furnish-

ing it in the politest manner, ruling it by the strictest maxims of economy and decorum, permit a friend to give a few cursory hints in an affair of so much importance.

Your building is composed of some of the finest materials I ever saw, and is so much the more liable to discover any flaw or spot that may accidentally touch it. — It is erected to a proper height, a just size, reared on a regular plan, and finished with the most accurate proportion. — On the top stands an eminent turret, furnished with a room of globular form, which, I observe, has two crystal windows in the front; these are so constructed as to be exceeding useful, as they command an extensive prospect, and, if always kept clean and bright, will prove a very great ornament to the house. I advise you not to look through them at every object that passes by; be sure to shut them soon at night, and you may open them as early as you please in the morning. — On each side I discover a small portal to receive company; take care they don't always stand open, for then you will be crowded with visitors, and, perhaps, with many such as you will not like; let them never be shut against the instructive parent, the advising friend, or the supplicating orphan. — I took notice of one gate in the front, at which all your company goes out; let that generally be barred close; be cautious what visitors you let out publicly, lest, if any of ill characters be seen coming from it, you draw a scandal upon your house; it will be necessary, therefore, to lay a strict injunction of vigilance on your two porters, who stand centinels in liveries of the deepest scarlet, just without the ivory pallisades. — I have seen some people paint the two pannels

just below the windows ; but I would advise you to the contrary, for your natural colours far exceed all the decorations of art.—This part of the edifice is supported by a pillar of Corinthian marble, whose base is ornamented with two alabaster semiglobes, over which is generally drawn a fine lawn curtain of admirable needlework.

Beneath is the great hall, in which you have a small closet of exquisite workmanship ; this, I suppose, is the place of your secret retirement, open to none but yourself, or some faithful intimate friend.—I advise you to keep this always clean, furnish it well, make it a little library of the best practical authors, and visit it frequently, especially when you return home from church, or leave a circle of acquaintance which you have met at the tea-table. Let the outside of the hall not appear like a hearse hung round with escutcheons, nor like a coach of state bedawbed with gilt and colourings ; but let it be plain, neat, and clean, to convince the world that it is kept more for use than ornament.

You are sensible, Miss, Time effaces the beauty, and demolishes the strength, of the noblest structure, and therefore will not be surprised to find your little tenement subject to the same change. Doubtless it has often wanted repairs, though you have lived in it no longer, which are plain intimations that the house will one day fall.—You may soon be turned out—the landlord may give you warning, or may not—this is all uncertain—be ever ready to go when called upon, and then you will not be afraid to leave it at the shortest notice.—One thing I would observe, too, is, that when you quit the house, no other tenant will inhabit it,

but it will ly waste and in ruins; yet the proprietor will some time or other rebuild it for your reception in a more durable manner, with the same materials, but so refined and modified that it will be liable to no accident or decay; and as it is absolutely necessary that your habitation be new reared in some other place, I heartily wish it may be in a finer country, under a milder climate, and well sheltered from all storms; then will your situation be happy and honourable, and your lease never expire.

Your's, &c.

ROBERT N.

LETTER XV.

From a sensible lady, with a never-failing receipt for a beauty-wash.

AS you seem so intent on improving the personal charms of your already amiable daughter, I can no longer delay answering your letter. —You would be glad, you say, of a receipt to make a wash; but it must be perfectly innocent. What I recommend, Madam, is truly so, and will greatly illustrate and preserve her complexion.

Pray let her observe the following rules:

In the morning fair water is to be used as a preparatory; after which she must abstain from all sudden gusts of passion, particularly envy, as that gives the skin a fallow paleness. It may seem trifling to talk of temperance; yet must this be attended to, both in eating and drinking, if she would avoid those pimples, for which the advertised washes are a boasted cure. Instead of rouge,

let her use moderate exercise, which will excite a natural bloom in her cheeks not to be imitated by art. Ingenuous candour, and unaffected good humour, will give an openness to her countenance that will make her universally agreeable. A desire of pleasing will add fire to her eyes, and breathing the morning air at sunrise will give her lips a vermilion hue. That amiable vivacity, which she now possesses, may be happily heightened and preserved, if she avoids late hours and card-playing, but not otherwise: for the first gives the face a drowsy disagreeable aspect, and the last is the mother of wrinkles.—A white hand is a very desirable ornament; and a hand can never be white unless it be kept clean. Nor is this all; for if the young lady will excel her companions in this respect, she must keep her hands in constant motion, which will occasion the blood to circulate freely, and have a wonderful effect. The motion I would recommend is working at her needle, brushing up the house, or twirling the distaff. It was this industry in our grandmothers which gave Kneller an opportunity of gratifying posterity with the view of so many fine hands and arms in his incomparable portraits.—A few words more, and I have done.—Let her preserve an unaffected neatness in her apparel: her fortune will permit her to dress elegantly; but her good sense should always prevent her from descending to gaudiness, which strikes the eyes of the ignorant, but disgusts those of true taste and discernment; besides, Madam, your daughter has so many natural charms, that she can have no occasion to wear clothes that will attract all the attention of the multitude. She possesses more beauties than she is acquainted with,

which is no small addition to her merit; but how can it be otherwise, when she is your daughter, and has you for an example?

I am, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Domestic rule the province of the wife.

Madam,

I MUST assert, that the right of directing domestic affairs is, by the law of Nature, in the woman; and that we are perfectly qualified for the exercise of dominion, notwithstanding what has often been said by male-coats to the contrary. Those who pretend to direct our bringing up, seem to have destined us to that power which they would afterwards dispute. We are employed in our samplers, or diverting ourselves with our babies; we pass from our mother's nursery to our own, and from imaginary visits to real ones, without fatiguing ourselves with a variety of unnecessary acquirements, on which the men most value themselves. Indeed, which I would condemn too eager a pursuit of, we are taught singing and dancing; but what are these to the drudgery of schools and universities? The business of a family, when thoroughly performed, takes in the whole circle of our time, and affords no room for any thing except innocent relaxations. We are certainly then more likely to understand domestic policy than the men, who have twenty other things to mind. A mere housewife, like a mere scholar, is fit for nothing else, I admit, and will make a man a very unsociable companion. But as some men of great

application to their respective professions have; notwithstanding, a very polite behaviour, so a woman may make the government of her house the principal care, without suffering it to become the principal theme of her discourse; nor do I think it at all necessary, that to establish a character as a manager, her husband should twice or thrice a week hear her scolding the servants. This is one of the great objections to female government, and our adversaries would fain present it as a thing as necessary to us as a standing army to the administration. But both may be calumnies, and the mere effects of a desire to get into other folks' places. Experience is wholly on our side; for wherever the master exceeds his proper sphere, and pretends to give law to the cookmaid as well as the coachman, we observe a great deal of discord and confusion. When a man, who is always a better judge when things are wrong than of the method of setting them to rights, entrenches on the woman's province, it is the ready way to make the rest of the family despise them both. But when a woman of tolerable good sense is allowed to direct her house without controul, all things go well; she prevents even her husband's wishes, the servants know their business, and the whole family live easy and happy. It is with great concern that I perceive our sex of late inclined to mind any thing rather than their families, which inclination must have fatal consequences. Can there be any thing more honourable for a woman than the right management of her family? And it may be observed to them, that they must take their choice, either to manage their children and servants, or to be managed by them. If liberty is the thing they aim

at, they certainly mistake the road. A woman's freedom consists in power, and not in a license to gad about, which is scandalous even in a girl, and bespeaks a giddiness of soul below compassion. The conduct of the estate or business ought surely to be in the husband; and if he parts with it, it is an act of weakness. The conduct of the house belongs as justly to the wife; and no man ought to marry a woman whom he would not trust with the management of such concerns. Adieu, dear friend! in-croach not on the province of your husband, but continue to be mistress in your own. I am,

Your affectionate friend,

SYLVIA SHARP.

LETTER XVII.

From a lady to her acquaintance, on growing old.

My dear Lucy,

I HAVE been thinking that *human understanding* is no less liable to be unhinged than the mechanism of the *human frame*. The least jar of a surprise puts it out of tune, and one cannot presently get into order again.—We have certainly *passions* of the *mind*, as well as *diseases* of the *body*, which we are not aware of till some sudden accident calls them forth; and the one are no less capable of suspending the *faculties* of *reason* for a time than the *other* are of obstructing that *animal fluid*, to the proper circulation of which we owe our health and vigour.

I was led into this reflection by catching myself in a folly which I shall not be much ashamed of confessing, since, on contemplating some passages

my observation supplies me with, I find the foible inherent, in a more or less degree, in the whole species of human kind, though few are ingenuous enough to acknowledge it.

I was sitting yesterday in my parlour window, looking carelessly on the people as they passed, when, all at once, a fellow abruptly presented himself before me, and cried, in a hoarse voice, *Spectacles, Madam, fine spectacles*; and, at the same time, thrust a pair of those nose-saddles within the fash. You cannot imagine, dear Lucy, how I was shocked: I gave the man a short answer, and immediately drew down the window.—“Good God!” said I to myself, “do I look old enough to be supposed to want spectacles?” not considering that it was the fellow’s trade to offer them to every body, and that many people, younger than myself, were obliged to make use of them.—I ran, however, to my glass, and fancied I perceived what they call the crow’s feet appearing at the corners of my eyes.—I looked, and looked again, and the more I did so the more I thought these cruel marks of Time were visible; and now recollecting that my last birth-day brought me into my one-and-thirtieth year, and that a very few more of them would rank me among the number of the aged, I fell into such a fit of the vapours as I had never before known. Is not this unaccountable?—Where now was my understanding?—where my reason? The little share I have is sufficient to make me know, that whoever lives a great while in this world must grow old, and few of us there are who desire to die young. Why was not this knowledge at hand to make me easy under the common course of Nature?

I do assure you I had grown two or three hours older before I could bring myself to be reconciled with the apprehensions that every moment brought me nearer to that so-much-dreaded stage of life ; but, thank Heaven, I got the better of it at last, and laughed at the foolish part my imagination had been acting.

That we all, however, have a natural aversion to gray hairs and wrinkles cannot be denied ; and that to overcome the uneasiness their approach inflicts requires the utmost exertion of our reason ; yet is not this an inconsistency, a kind of absurdity in our habit of thinking ?—We ridicule a thousand lesser follies of mankind, yet pass over that which more than all deserves censure, the being ashamed or afraid of attaining what all the world, as well as ourselves, would wish to arrive at.—But we would live for ever if we could, and yet be always young ; we would annihilate the depredations of Time from fifteen to sixty : and even then not be content, perhaps, to be thought in our decline.

Were old age terrible to us merely as it is the forerunner of death, or as it is generally attended with infirmities which render life a burden, I should not be so much surprised ; but, alas ! we see death and diseases seize on youth and strength ; no time of life is a security against either.—Nor is it altogether the apprehension of being deprived of what share of beauty Nature may have bestowed upon us that renders it so alarming, since that also may be lost by the smallpox, and a thousand other accidents.—No, it is only the name, not the effects, we so much dread ; and I believe most people would

rather chuse deformity with youth than comeliness with old age.

This, and some other propensities of the mind, in my opinion, are sufficient to convince any thinking person of the importance of human understanding, and oblige us all to own, with the poet, that

Reason in man is but a twinkling lamp
Of wand'ring life, that wakes and winks by turns;
Fooling the follower betwixt shade and shining.

You will imagine, by my being so serious, that I have not yet got over the fright the man put me into, and, indeed, I am not sure whether I have or not; but, be that as it will, I have resolution enough to wish, from the very bottom of my heart, that you and I may grow old in friendship, and that, whatever effect time may have upon our persons, our minds may remain as now united; which will be a balance against the mortifications in the power of the old gentleman with the hour-glass, to,

My dear Lucy,

Your's, with the most perfect amity,

HILARIA.

LETTER XVIII.

To a lady who had lost her beauty by the smallpox.

My dear Ophelia,

I RECEIVED your's, and rejoice too much on your recovery to be able to condole with you

on any alteration your late illness has made in you; and, indeed, how great soever it may be, am far from thinking it deserves to be mentioned with that concern you express.—You have encountered Death, and foiled him at one of his sharpest weapons; and, if you have received some scars, ought to look upon them rather as trophies of victory than blemishes.—What if your complexion has lost some part of its fair enamel, and your features are not altogether so delicate? the less charms your glass presents you with, the more you will find in your closet; and, deprived of vain pleasure in contemplating the graces of your outward form, you will have the greater leisure to improve and embellish those which are not so easily impaired.

Let us pretend what we will, it is the ambition of attracting admirers that renders beauty of so much value to all the young and gay; but, if we consider seriously, we shall find that it is virtue, good sense, sweetness of disposition, and complaisance, of which the girdle of Citherea should be composed.—The finest face in the world, without them, will not long maintain its empire over the heart of a man of understanding, as the poet truly says,

Beauty soon grows familiar to the eye;
Virtue alone has charms that never die.

Do not think, however, that I am glad to find you are more on a level, than before this accident, with the greatest part of our sex. I confess, the beauties of the person greatly contribute to set off and render those of the mind conspicuous, and, for

that reason, should lament extremely any defect in the one, if I were not certain you had enough of the other to engross the whole attention of as many as know you; and that they may every day increase in the lustre of true dignity is the sincere wish of,

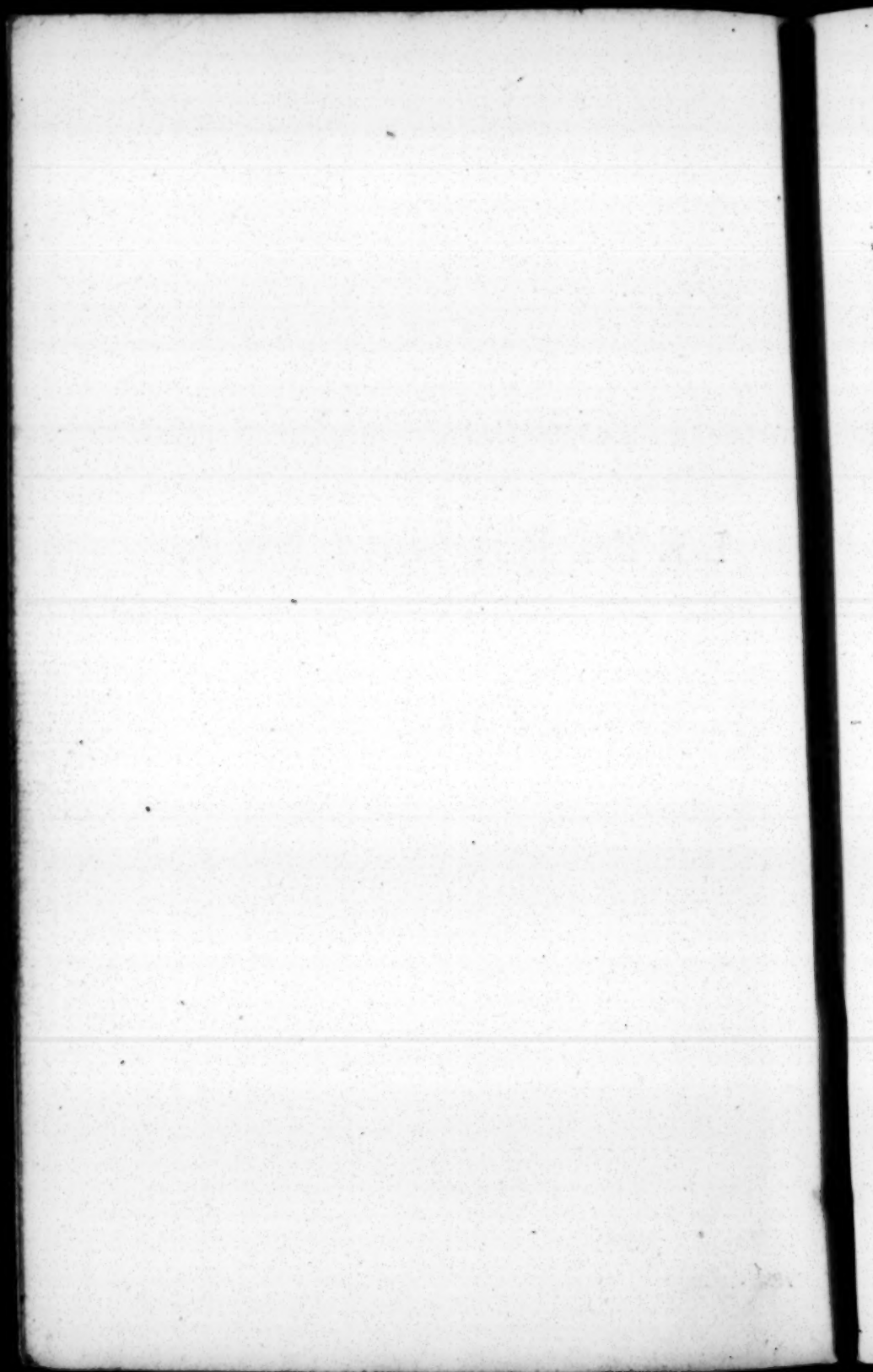
My dear Ophelia,

Your's,

SOPHRONIA.

THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART FOURTH.



THE COMPLETE
LETTER-WRITER.

PART IV.

Elegant LETTERS on various subjects, to improve the style and entertain the mind, from eminent authors.

LETTER I.

The following letter, written by Mr Gay, giving an account of two lovers who were struck dead by the same flash of lightning, is reckoned a masterpiece in epistolary descriptive writing.

Stanton-Harcourt, Aug. 9, 1718.

THE only news you can expect to have from me here is news from Heaven: for I am quite out of the world, and there is scarce any thing can reach me except the noise of thunder, which undoubtedly you have heard too. We have heard in old authors, of high towers levelled by it to the ground, while the humble valleys have escaped. The only thing that is proof against it is the laurel, which, however, I take to be no great security to the brains of modern authors. But to let you see that the contrary to this often happens, I must acquaint you that the highest and most extravagant heap of towers in the universe, which

is in this neighbourhood, stands still undefaced, while a cock of barley in our next field has been consumed to ashes. Would to God that this heap of barley had been all that had perished ! But unhappily beneath this little shelter sat two much more constant lovers than ever were found in romance under the shade of a beech-tree. John Hewit was a well-set man of about five-and-twenty; Sarah Drew might be rather called comely than beautiful, and was about the same age. They had passed through the various labours of the year together with the greatest satisfaction; if she milked, it was his morning and evening care to bring the cows to her hand. It was but the last fair that he bought her a present of green silk for her straw hat; and the posy on her silver ring was of his chusing. Their love was the talk of the whole neighbourhood; for Scandal never affirmed that they had any other views than the lawful possession of each other in marriage. It was that very morning that he had obtained the consent of her parents, and it was but till the next week that they were to wait to be happy. Perhaps, in the intervals of their work they were now talking of their wedding clothes, and John was suiting several sorts of poppies and field-flowers to her complexion, to chuse her a knot for the wedding-day. While they were thus busied (it was on the last of July, between two and three in the afternoon) the clouds grew black, and such a storm of lightning and thunder ensued, that all the labourers made the best of their way to what shelter the trees and hedges afforded. Sarah was frightened, and fell down in a swoon on a heap of barley; John, who never separated from her, sat down by

her side, having raked together two or three heaps, the better to secure her from the storm. Immediately there was heard so loud a crack, as if heaven had split asunder; every one was solicitous for the safety of his neighbour, and called to one another throughout the field. No answer being returned to those who called to our lovers, they stepped to the place where they lay; they perceived the barley all in a smoke, and then spied this faithful pair, John with one arm about Sarah's neck, and the other held over her, as if to screen her from the lightning. They were both struck in this tender posture. Sarah's left eyebrow was singed, and there appeared a black spot on her breast; her lover was all over black, but not the least signs of life were found in either. Attended by their melancholy companions, they were conveyed to the town, and the next day interred in Stanton-Harcourt church-yard. My Lord Harcourt, at Mr Pope's and my request, has caused a stone to be placed over them, upon condition that we should furnish the epitaph: which is as follows:

When eastern lovers feed the funeral fire,
On the same pile the faithful pair expire:
Here pitying heav'n that virtue mutual found,
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.
Hearts so sincere th'Almighty saw well pleas'd,
Sent his own lightning, and the victims seiz'd.

But my Lord is apprehensive the country people will not understand this; and Mr Pope says he will make one with something of scripture in it, and with as little poetry as Hopkins and Sternhold.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

The three following letters were wrote by a young lady of a good family, and very genteely bred, (but afterwards reduced), to a gentleman going abroad, under whose care and protection she was desirous of retiring, in the capacity of a housekeeper, from the frowns of the world.

SIR,

NO circumstance is more shocking than that of being obliged to strangers for relief; and, however conscious I may be of my own innocence and well-meaning, the presumption of addressing a gentleman in this manner may be a sufficient reason to prevent my receiving such a share of credit, as, were I known to you, I might with justice pretend to. I have had the misfortune to receive an education greatly above the rank that Heaven has allotted me, and I now, too soon, at the age of eighteen, have struggled through more difficulties than you would chuse to be acquainted with; and it would but ill become me to shock the man to whom I wish to be obliged. It is now some time since I formed the design to leave England, and withdraw myself from the acquaintance of those that have known me in a higher state. I can be content in a decent retirement, and shall endeavour to do my duty in the station I pretend to. Chance has directed me to you; and it is without a blush (and surely no one should be ashamed of so innocent a boldness) that I offer myself to attend you abroad in the quality of a housekeeper. My character and story you shall be acquainted

with; the first will be no discredit to me, and the latter, perhaps, may raise a compassion in you that may be serviceable to me. If you approve my design, or have any curiosity to hear more, I would beg the favour of you to advertise, that the letter directed to Tom's was received, and I will then venture to trouble you again.

LETTER III.

SIR,

I HAVE so few obligations to the world, that I am at times surpris'd at myself to find that the idea of gratitude shall be known to me, and yet I feel a thankfulness in me for the notice you have taken of my (perhaps indiscreet) application. A thousand distracting thoughts have got the better of my judgment; and though I know where you live, and am fully convinced that you would scorn to mean me an injury, yet a certain prejudice of education forbids me to pursue what I designed, and I shall now solicit nothing more from you than a pardon for having rais'd your expectation, and engag'd your curiosity to be acquainted with a story that a womanish pride will, perhaps, for ever prevent being known. I flatter'd myself, when I wrote before, that I had been mistress of more resolution; but my fears startle me, and I am so convinced of the ill methods I have taken to be acquainted with you, (and your knowledge of the world must necessarily encourage such suspicions of me), that no temptation can now be sufficient to make me discover myself. I am ashamed of what has happened, and feel a resentment to myself for having dared to alarm your good nature with fears

of an unfortunate young woman. I will flatter myself you feel for me; and the tenderness and humanity that I believe you master of shall at least be thus far satisfied, that I will hereafter, if Fortune has any favours to bestow on me, give you the satisfaction of knowing who I am, and by what accident I thought of applying to you. Adieu! *Je me flatte que le bon Dieu aura pitié de mon innocence, car je n'ai jamais beaucoup fait de mal.*

LETTER IV.

SIR,

WERE I in the least inclined to discover myself, so immediate an answer to your advertisement might in justice be esteemed a forwardness; but as my resolution is fixed, it will bear a better interpretation, and ought to be looked on as a decent regard for the person that seems to bear a share in my misfortune. You may with great reason reproach me for having drawn you into so idle a correspondence; and the persuasion I have of your goodness and humanity are to me strong testimonials that your inquiry is not the effect of a giddy or ill-meaning curiosity, but proceeds from the true principles of virtue, and from a design of giving me all the assistance I can wish. I must own that necessity first tempted me to apply; and tho' I am determined to stop short, and give a check to my ill-judged scheme, yet I will ever encourage myself in a thankfulness to you, and compliment my own judgment for having so easily discovered the perfections of so amiable a character. My pen seems pleased with the office of writing to you, and I am now prepared to run greater

lengths than Patience might excuse. We are all fond of doing what is most pleasing to us, and it is a flattering of my vanity in the supposition of my having engaged your good wishes. My story, which is full of a variety of shocking circumstances and distress, added to a too sensible feeling, has so furnished me with expressions, that I should conceive a hatred to myself were I capable of a farther attempt to make an impression on you. Adieu ! I shall for ever love and honour your generous design, and will always have this share of merit with you, and no necessity nor other unfortunate circumstance shall again force me to give an alarm to your humanity, or expose me to myself for having dared to raise your curiosity to the knowledge of that which charity for every well-meaning person commands me to conceal.

Vous allez vers la reputation vers le credit, et moi j'en reviens.

LETTER V.

The following most charming and affectionate letter, universally admired, was written by Mr Pope to the Bishop of Rochester, about a month before his banishment.

ONCE more I write to you as I promised, and this once I fear will be the last ; the curtain will soon be drawn between my friend and me, and nothing left but to wish you a long good night. May you enjoy a state of repose in this life, not unlike that sleep of the soul which some have believed is to succeed it, where we ly utterly forgetful of that world from which we are gone, and

ripening for that to which we are to go. If you retain any memory of the past, let it only image to you what has pleased you best; sometimes present a dream of an absent friend, or bring you back an agreeable conversation. But, upon the whole, I hope you will think less of the time past than of the future; as the former has been less kind to you than the latter infallibly will be. Do not envy the world your studies; they will tend to the benefit of men against whom you can have no complaint, I mean of all posterity; and, perhaps, at your time of life nothing else is worth your care. What is every year of a wise man's life but a censure or critic on the past? Those whose date is the shortest live long enough to laugh at one half of it. The boy despises the infant, the man the boy, the philosopher both, and the Christian all. You may now begin to think your manhood was too much a puerility; and you will never suffer your age to be but a second infancy. The toys and baubles of your childhood are hardly now more below you than those toys of our riper and declining years, the drums and rattles of ambition, and the dirt and baubles of avarice. At this time, when you are cut off from a little society, and made a citizen of the world at large, you should bend your talents not to serve a party, or a few, but all mankind. Your genius should mount above that mist in which its participation and neighbourhood with earth hath long involved it. To shine abroad, and to Heaven, ought to be the business and the glory of your present situation. Remember it was at such a time that the greatest lights of antiquity dazzled and blazed the most; in their retreat, in their exile, or in their death. But why

do I talk of dazzling or blazing? it was then that they did good, that they gave light, and that they became guides to mankind.

Those aims alone are worthy of spirits truly great, and such I, therefore, hope will be your's. Resentment indeed may remain, perhaps cannot be quite extinguished, in the noblest minds; but revenge will never harbour there. Higher principles than those of the first, and better principles than those of the latter, will infallibly influence men whose thoughts and whose hearts are enlarged, and cause them to prefer the whole to any part of mankind, especially to so small a part as one's single self.

Believe me, my Lord, I look upon you as a spirit entered into another life, as one just upon the edge of immortality, where the passions and affections must be much more exalted, and where you ought to despise all little views, and all mean retrospects. Nothing is worth your looking back, and therefore look forward, and make (as you can) the world look after you; but take care that it be not with pity, but with esteem and admiration.

I am, with the greatest sincerity, and passion for your fame as well as happiness,

Your's, &c.

LETTER. VI.

To Lady——from Mr Pope, on witty and serious letters.

Madam,

I AM not at all concerned to think that this letter may be less entertaining than some I have

sent. I know you are a friend that will think a kind letter as good as a diverting one. He that gives you his mirth, makes a much less present than he that gives you his heart; and true friends would rather see such thoughts as they communicate only to one another, than what they squander about to all the world. They who can set a right value on any thing, will prize one tender well-meant word above all that ever made them laugh in their lives. If I did not think so of you, I should never have taken much pains to endeavour to please you by writing, or any thing else. Wit, I am sure, I want, at least in the degree that I see others have it, who would at all seasons alike be entertaining; but I would willingly have some qualities that may be (at some seasons) of more comfort to myself, and of more service to my friends. I would cut off my own head, if it had nothing better than wit in it; and tear out my own heart, if it had no better disposition than to laugh only myself, and laugh at all my neighbours.

I know you will think it an agreeable thing to hear that I have done a great deal of Homer. If it be tolerable, the world may thank you for it; for if I could have seen you every day, and imagined my company could have every day pleased you, I should scarce have thought it worth my while to please the world. How many verses could I gladly have left unfinished, and turned into it, for people to say what they would of, had I been permitted to pass all those hours more pleasingly? Whatever some may think, fame is a thing I am much less covetous of than your friendship; for that, I hope, will last all my life; the other I cannot answer for. What if they should both grow

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greater after my death? Alas! they would both be of no advantage to me. Therefore think upon it, and love me as well as ever you can while I live.

Now I talk of fame, I send you my Temple of Fame, which is just come out: but my sentiments about it you will see better by this epigram.

What's fame with men, by custom of the nation,
Is call'd in women only reputation:
About them both why keep we such a pother?
Part you with one, and I'll renounce the other.

LETTER VII.

To the Hon. Mrs H——, from Mr Pope.

Madam,

ALL the pleasure or use of familiar letters is to give us the assurance of a friend's welfare; at least it is all I know, who am a mortal enemy and dispenser of what they call fine letters. In this view, I promise you, it will always be a satisfaction to me to write letters, and to receive them from you; because I unfeignedly have your good at my heart, and am that thing which many people make only a subject to display their fine sentiments upon, a friend; which is a character that admits of little to be said, till something may be done. Now, let me fairly tell you, I do not like your style: it is very pretty, therefore I don't like it; and if you writ as well as Voiture, I would not give a farthing for such letters, unless I were to sell them to be printed. Methinks I have lost the Mrs L*** I formerly knew, who writ and talked like other people, (and sometimes better). You must allow

D d

me to say, you have not said a sensible thing in all your letter, except where you speak of showing kindness, and expecting it in return; but the addition you make about your being but two-and-twenty is again in the style of wit and abomination. To show you how very satisfactory you wrote, in all your letters you have never told me how you do. Indeed I see it was absolutely necessary for me to write to you, before you continue to take more notice of me; for I ought to tell you what you are to expect; that is to say, kindness, which I never failed (I hope) to return; and not wit, which if I want, I am not much concerned, because judgment is a better thing; and if I had, I would make use of it, rather to play upon those I despised than to trifle with those I loved. You see, in short, after what manner you may most agreeably write to me. Tell me you are my friend, and you can be no more at a loss about that article. As I have opened my mind upon this to you, it may also serve for Mr H——, who will see by it what manner of letters he must expect, if he corresponds with me. As I am too seriously your's and his servant to put turns upon you instead of good wishes, so, in return, I should have nothing but honest plain How do ye's, and, Pray remember me's; which, not being fit to be shown to any body for wit, may be a proof we correspond only for ourselves, in mere friendliness; as doth, God is my witness,

Your very, &c.

LETTER VIII.

From Mr Pope to Mr Steele, on sickness and dying young.

YOU formerly observed to me, that nothing made a more ridiculous figure in a man's life than the disparity we often find in him sick and well: thus one of an unfortunate constitution is perpetually exhibiting a miserable example of the weakness of his mind and of his body in their turns. I have had frequent opportunities of late to consider myself in these different views, and I hope have received some advantage by it, if what Waller says be true, that

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lies in new light thro' chinks that time has made.

Then surely sickness contributing no less than old age to the shaking down this scaffolding of the body, may discover the inward structure more plainly. Sickness is a sort of early old age: it teaches us a diffidence in our earthly state, and inspires us with the thoughts of a future, better than a thousand volumes of philosophers and divines; it gives so warning a concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and youth, that we then think of fortifying ourselves within when there is so little dependence upon our outworks. Youth, at the very best, is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age: it is like a stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but, at the same time, it is undermining it at the root in

secret. My youth has dealt more fairly and openly with me ; it has afforded several prospects of my danger, and given me an advantage not very common to young men, that the attractions of the world have not dazzled me very much ; and I begin where most people end, with a full conviction of the emptiness of all sorts of ambition, and the unsatisfactory nature of all human pleasure. When a smart fit of sickness tells me this scurvy tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am even as unconcerned as was that honest Hibernian, who, being in bed in the great storm, some years ago, was told the house would tumble over his head, made answer, " What care I for the house ? I am " only a lodger." I fancy it is the best time to die when one is in the best humour ; and, so excessively weak as I now am, I may say with conscience, that I am not at all uneasy at the thought that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me. When I reflect what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is with respect to the whole creation, methinks it is a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers will smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast, as they are used to do. " The memory of man," (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of Wisdom) " passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that " tarrieth but one day." There are reasons enough in the fourth chapter of the same book to make any young man contented with the prospect of death. " For honourable age is not that which standeth

“ in length of time, or is measured by number of
 “ years : but wisdom is the gray hair to men, and
 “ an unspotted life is old age. He was taken away
 “ speedily, lest wickedness should alter his under-
 “ standing, or deceit beguile his soul,” &c.

I am your's, &c.

LETTER IX.

*The PARLOUR LOOKING - GLASS to the beautiful
 Angelica.*

Madam,

I HAVE enjoyed the honour of serving your Ladyship some years ; during which time, as you have been pleased to favour me with evident marks of your esteem, and a familiarity that none of your other untensils can boast of, though many of them my betters by far ; as therefore I have shown you to yourself so often, and been so happy always to have my fidelity approved of by your Ladyship, I hope you will pardon my boldness, in taking this method to discover to you some failings in yourself, which my surface cannot properly represent. If I may presume to say so, Madam, you consult me much too often, and I am confident it would be better for you if you was to be a greater stranger to me. How many thousand times must you be told that you are handsome ? — I assure you of it every day ; but you will not be satisfied unless I tell you so every hour, nay, almost every moment. — I cannot lie ; your person is exceeding amiable ; but I must, at the same time, inform your Ladyship, with my usual sincerity, that you would be infinitely more agreeable if you did

not think so. Consider, Madam, I beseech you, that if you come to me ten thousand times a-day, I cannot make you a bit the better, or the handsomer; but shall certainly destroy one of the finest ornaments of Beauty, by rendering you too well acquainted with your own perfections. Whenever you stand before me, with all your charms set forth to the best advantage, I perceive you are apt to view yourself with too great pleasure, and grow proud and conceited of your own beauty; which, in time, will make other people despise and ridicule you; and therefore I honestly and ingenuously entreat you to avoid my company; for, Madam, I must confess, that the worst enemy the fair ones have cannot do them so much prejudice as I their chief favourite. It grieves me to the heart to find it so, and often puzzles me extremely to account for their fondness of me, when I so continually do them mischief.—Whether it be, as a witty gentleman once said of me, from my talent of casting reflections:—or whether it be from the large quantity of quicksilver which belongs to me, and without which I am useless as well as innocent; for, as the learned observe, Madam, mercury is highly prejudicial to your sex, either when there is too much of it in the composition of a fair lady, or when it is used externally as an help to beauty: as, in the former case, it is generally the cause of extensive levity, so, in the latter, it is always observed to hurt the eyes, and deface those charms which it is designed to assist and improve:—or whether my gaily-gilded frame is too apt to infect the mind of the beholder with vanity:—or, lastly, whether it be from the brittleness of my other materials, which, by a kind of sympathy

affect people who are too frequently conversant with me :—From whatever cause it proceeds, a lady who has a fine face, might almost as well fall into the smallpox as to be often in my company. How many charming creatures have I spoiled; and made beauty the greatest misfortune that could befall them !—I cannot think on it without concern.—Why am I fated to be thus unlucky, and injure those the most that love me best? Alas ! why was I made a looking-glass! Was it my desire to be covered with silver, and inclosed in a frame of gold !—did I aspire to be fixed in this honourable place, and become a lady's favourite ! ---Oh! that I had been some meaner piece of furniture, less respected, and less mischievous. Keep off, dear Madam, I beseech you, from an unhappy thing, which Destiny makes pernicious to the loveliest creature under heaven, or I shall soon infect you with the worst disease incident to beauty, and that is vanity.—I am, it is true, an useful servant, if employed only when I ought to be, which is seldom; but if a lady grows so fond of me, that she runs to ask my opinion of every look; if she consults me forty times for once that she goes to her Prayer-book or Bible, I shall certainly prove much more hurtful to her than age or ugliness. I beg, Madam, that you will interpret what your poor servant says to proceed wholly from respect and love for you.—The tender regard I have for your Ladyship, together with some symptoms I lately have discovered, make me fearful for you.—I dread the apprehension of bringing contempt on so good a mistress, and would not for the world be the occasion of your losing any one grace of so fine a woman;—No! rather

let me be broken into a thousand pieces ! I am not without fear of giving offence by the freedom I have taken ? but though you banish me your presence, I cannot forbear speaking in a case where your Ladyship's good seems so much concerned ; and, indeed, if what I dread should come to pass, it would be better for us to part for ever.—Better for you to be without my service than to suffer by it ; and better for me to lose my lady, and be thrown into a corner, than remain where I am, and be accessory and instrumental in spoiling as much sweetness and beauty as ever Looking-glass had the happiness to show. I am, Madam, with the most dutiful respect,

Your most faithful and devoted
humble servant,

PARLOUR LOOKING-GLASS.

LETTER X.

From Hortensius to his friend Palemon, giving him an account of his happiness in retirement.

I WRITE this while Cleora is angling by my side, under the shade of a spreading elm that hangs over the banks of the river. A nightingale, more harmonious even than Strada's, is serenading us from a hawthorn bush, which smiles with all the gaiety of youth and beauty : while

— Gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, disperse
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils.

Milton.

While I am thus enjoying the innocent luxury of this vernal delight, I look back upon those scenes of

turbulence wherein I was engaged with more than ordinary distaste; and despise myself for ever having entertained so mean a thought as to be rich and great. One of our monarchs used to say, "That he looked upon those to be the happiest men in the nation, whose fortune had placed them in the country above a high constable, and below the trouble of a justice of peace." It is in a mediocrity of this happy kind that I here pass my life, with a fortune far above the necessity of engaging in the drudgery of business, and with desires much too humble to have any relish for the splendid baits of ambition. You must not, however, imagine that I affect the Stoic, or pretend to have eradicated all my passions. The sum of my philosophy amounts to no more than to cherish none but such as I may easily and innocently gratify, and to banish all the rest as so many bold intruders upon my repose. I endeavour to practise the maxim of a French poet, by considering every thing that is not within my possession as not worth having. It is impossible, Palemon, to reconcile you to these un aspiring sentiments, and to lower your flight to the humble level of genuine happiness? Let me, at least, prevail with you to spare a day or two from the *certamina divitiarum*, (as Horace, I think, calls them,) from those splendid contests in which you are engaged, just to take a view of the sort of life we lead in the country. If there is any thing wanted to complete the happiness I here find, it is, that you are so seldom a witness to it. Adieu!

LETTER XI.

A letter of consolation on the death of a friend.

I SHOULD never have believed, Madam, that one of your letters could have afflicted me, how bad news soever it had brought me. The bare sight of your writing seemed to me a remedy against every evil that I could imagine; but I acknowledge to you, it is an extreme grief to me that I have been informed of the loss we have had. Our friend was valuable in every respect; she was beautiful, tender, generous, witty, and of so just a judgment that she valued you above every thing in the world. She had over and above, in dying, the only good quality which she wanted during her life; that is, she bore with resolution a thing, the bare name of which had made her tremble. She accompanied this greatness of soul with so truly a Christian piety, that I think we ought not to mourn for her. It is loving her with too selfish an affection to be sorrowful when she leaves us in order to be better, and when she goes to enjoy in the other world a repose which she could never find in this. I shall endeavour to make advantage of the exhortation you gave me to follow so good an example, and it will not be the first time that you have made me a better man. The troubles I have hitherto had will not ill assist your admonitions; for I think few things contribute more to make us die without reluctance than to have no pleasure in life. Not that I should be very glad to finish my career too hastily, seeing that you must return soon. You may guess whe-

ther it be easy for me to renounce the advantage of seeing you again, and of protesting to you to what degree I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

From a gentleman to his son, just arrived from Paris, against servile complaisance and talkativeness; with some directions how to behave politely in company.

Dear Tom,

THERE is something in your behaviour since your return from Paris that displeases me, and I must frankly tell you, that I don't think you are at all benefited by travelling. You have, by keeping company with coxcombs, or by mistaking ceremony for politeness, contracted a habit of not only talking much, and in a very frothy trifling manner, but of sacrificing every thing to compliment. Even your sincerity is offered up to ceremony; and you think yourself obliged, in point of good manners, to agree, like Polonius in the play, with every thing that is said, whether right or wrong. You don't want understanding, Tom; nor are you without a good share of learning: and yet that eternal simper, that cringe and obsequiousness, render both suspected, and tire all your acquaintance, who (I am told) laugh at your behaviour, and speak of this behind your back, though they have not friendship enough to confess it to your face. But your father, who loves you sincerely, and who considers you as a part of himself, can never see you do any thing that may tend to your disadvantage, without warning

you of the consequence ; for that father must have a very bad heart, or a very bad head, indeed, who does not inform his son of his faults. Your's is not an error of disposition, but of judgment, and therefore it may be easily rectified. You, I know, my dear Tom, intend it for civility and politeness ; but you are mistaken. Forced and affected compliments are the reverse. Politeness is ever attained with ease and freedom, and despises every thing that is unnatural. Besides, this cringing and fawning render your sincerity suspected: Those who make large professions to every body are esteemed by no body. It is all considered as froth, and their friendship is supposed to be as trifling, insipid, and troublesome, as their conversation. Cast off, therefore, my dear Tom, this sort of behaviour, and put on one that is more manly, and consistent with the character of your family, who were always esteemed for their openness, freedom, and sincerity, which intitles a man to more respect than all the fine speeches and low bows in the world. Not that I would have you entirely disregard what you brought from the dancing-school. A proper deportment is necessary, and even a little ceremony may be consistent with politeness and good manners ; it is the excess that makes it blameable. Look at Mr Montague, for in this case one example is better than ten precepts ; he is esteemed an accomplished gentleman, every one is pleased with his behaviour, all are charmed with his conversation ; and the means he pursued to attain this art of pleasing universally are these :

He takes care to keep none but good company, (for by his company he is sensible that he shall be known and distinguished) ; among such his care

are ever open to receive instruction; for he considers, that a silent young man generally makes a wise old one. He attends to every body, and speaks but little, and that not till he has heard and collected the opinions of the whole company; well knowing, that he shall profit more by hearing than speaking on any subject; and that, by this means, he not only fathoms the capacities of the company, but also gratifies, as it were, and obliges each person, by giving him an opportunity to talk; and especially when, with proper questions, he introduces such subjects as each man can speak to with propriety and judgment. This he does with wonderful dexterity, and offers every one an occasion of displaying his talents; for he knows that, in order to keep up an universal good humour, every man should be pleased with himself as well as with his company. And, pray, what pleases a man more than to have an opportunity of letting the circle know that he is somebody? How unlike him are those who, having seen nothing of the world, expose themselves to contempt and ridicule, by impertinently giving their opinion of things they do not understand? What Mr Montague says is always to the purpose, is properly addressed, and every body hears him with satisfaction; for though he is young in years, he is old in experience and understanding. When he speaks, it is always with a becoming ease and freedom. He has resolution enough to defend and support the truth; but always delivers his sentiments in such a manner that it may not appear like dictating to the company; and when he has done, he hears (let them differ from him ever so much) with patience, complacency, and temper. In short,

Tom, excuses of ceremony will never gain a man friends, but impertinent babbling will, undoubtedly, create him enemies: for conversation is a banquet which every man is entitled to a share of who is present; and why should any one expect to have the whole feast to himself? Besides, the very end of conversation, which is improvement, is thereby destroyed; for he who always talks has no time to hear, and, consequently, can reap no benefit from what is said in company. Another vice in conversation (if I may be allowed that expression) I would caution you against, and that is talking obscenely; which is not only a mark of a depraved mind, but of low breeding, and is never encouraged but in the company of fools; since, as my Lord Roscommon justly observes,

“ Immodest words admit of no defence;

“ For want of decency is want of sense.

I am, dear son,

Your truly affectionate father,

LETTER XIII.

*The following letter was written to the Dean of Waterford by a widower, the father of six children, under the fictitious name of Elzevir. — The design of it was to invite the Dean and his company to supper, particularly Miss Elisabeth Marshal, a young lady about eighteen, — and whose fortune was 30,000*l.* who was lodged in the Dean's study, he having much company at that time.*

Rev. Sir,

I AM told there is a book which lyes in your study in sheets: and all who have seen it admire

that it should remain so long unbound. I think it is called *Marshal's Epithalamium*, or some such name; but lest I should be mistaken in the title, I will describe it as well as I can.

It is a fair and beautiful manuscript, the ink very black and shining, on the whitest virgin vellum that can be imagined; the characters are so nice and delicate as to discover it to be the work of some masterly hand; and there is such a symmetry and exact proportion in all its parts, and the features (if I may so call them) are so just and true, that it puts the reader often to a stand in admiring the beauties of them.

The book has an additional ornament, which it did not want, all the margin being flourished with gold; but that which commends it more is, that though it has been written full eighteen years, as I have been informed, yet it is not sullied nor stained; inasmuch that one would think it was never once turned over by any man.

The volume of itself does not appear to be of any great bulk, and yet I understand it has been valued at 30,000 *l*.

It is a pity so valuable a piece should ever be lost; and the way to prevent this is by increasing the copies of it. If the author will give consent, and you will license it, I will immediately put it into the press. I have all the necessary apparatus for the purpose, and a curious set of letters, that were never used but in the impression of one book, and of this too no more than half a dozen copies: so that you must imagine they are never the worse for wearing. For my part, I will spare no pains to embellish and adorn the whole with the most natural and lively figures; and I shall not despair

of producing an edition as beautiful in the eyes of men as the dear original is at present in mine. — Methinks I could read it with pleasure night and day.

If therefore you will do me the favour to let me have your company this evening, and bring this incomparable piece along with you, it will add to the entertainment of every one, but particularly of him, who is always, with great respect,

Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
and faithful friend,

ELZEVIR.

LETTER XIV.

*From * * * to Cleora, on the pleasures of retirement.*

Madam,

IT is certainly better for yourself, and more for the security of mankind, that you should live in some rural abode than appear in the world; such persons as you are fatal to the public tranquillity, and do mischief without ever designing it: but I must own, when belles and beaux retire to country shades for the sake of heavenly contemplation, the world will be well reformed. A hermit's life might be tolerable while the serious hours are divided between Hyde-Park and the opera: but a more distant retreat, in the full pride of your charms and youth, would be very extraordinary. To be convinced by so early experience, that mankind are only amused with dreams and fantastic appearances, must proceed from a superior degree of virtue and good sense. After a

thousand convictions of the vanity of other pursuits, how few know the emphasis of these few lines:

Sweet solitude! when life's gay hours are past,
Howe'er we range, in thee we fix at last.
Toss'd thro' tempestuous seas, (the voyage o'er,)
Pale we look back, and bless the friendly shore.
Our own strict judges, our past life we scan,
And ask if virtue has enlarg'd the span?
If bright the prospect, we the grave defy,
Trust future ages, and contented die. *Tickel.*

Nothing, perhaps, is more terrible to the imagination than an absolute solitude; yet, I must own, such a retreat, as disengages the mind from those interests and passions which mankind generally pursue, appears to me the most certain way to happiness: quietly to withdraw from the crowd, and leave the gay and ambitious to divide the honours and pleasures of the world, without being a rival or competitor in any of these advantages, must leave a person in perfect and unenvied repose.

Without any apology, I am going to talk to myself; and what follows may be properly called a digression.

Let me lose the remembrance of this busy world, and hear no more of its distracting tumults! Ye vain grandeurs of the earth! ye perishing riches and fantastic pleasures! what are your proudest boasts? Can you yield undecaying delights, joys becoming the dignity of reason, and the capacities of an immortal mind? Ask the happy spirits above at what price they value their enjoyments? ask them, if the whole creation should purchase one moment's interval of their bliss? No:—One beam of celestial light obscures

and casts a reproach on all the beauty this world can boast.

This is talking in buskins, you will think ; and, indeed, I may resign crowns and sceptres, and give up the grandeurs of the world, with as much imaginary triumph as a hero might fight battles and conquer armies in a dream.

In the height of this romantic insult, I am,
Madam,

Your most obliged humble servant.

LETTER XV.

In the style of a lady, by Mr Pope.

PRAY what is your opinion of fate ? for I must confess I am one of those that believe in fate and predestination. — No, I cannot go so far as that ; but I own I am of opinion one's stars may incline though not compel one ; and that is a sort of free-will : for we may be able to resist inclination, but not compulsion.

Do not you think they have got into the most preposterous fashion this winter that ever was, of flouncing the petticoat so very deep that it looks like an entire coat of lutestring ?

It is a little cool, indeed, for this time of year ; but then, my dear, you will allow it has an extreme clean pretty look.

Ay, so has my muslin apron ; but I would not chuse to make it a winter suit of clothes.

Well, now I will swear, child, you have put me in mind of a very pretty dress ; let me die if I do not think a muslin flounce, made very full, would give one a very agreeable flirtation-air.

Well, I swear it would be charming! and I should like it of all things—Do you think there are any such thing as spirits?

Do you believe there is any such place as the Elysian fields! O gad, that would be charming! I wish I were to go to the Elysian fields when I die, and then I should not care if I were to leave the world to-morrow; but is one to meet there with what one has loved most in this world?

Now you must tell me this positively. To be sure you can, or what do I correspond with you for, if you will not tell me all? You know I abominate reserve.

LETTER XVI.

To Mrs Rowe, on the vanity of all sublunary enjoyments.

PEOPLE seem at present more busily employed in preparing for the King's birthday than for their own last; and appear to be in greater anxiety for a seat in the dancing-room than for a seat in Paradise.

I was last night with —; a barge of music followed us; but, in the midst of this gaiety, your letter was not the only thing that put me in mind of mortality: I had such a violent pain in my head, that neither the wit of the company, the softness of the music, nor the beauty of the evening, could give me any sincere delight.—If pleasure be the lot of man, it must be in something beyond the grave; for, on this side, constant experience tells us all is vanity.

But this confession has hardly any influence on

human conduct; for people in a high rank must often act against their reason to avoid being thought unfashionable; and, for fear of being thought mad by the modish world, must act in a manner which they are sensible is being truly so, to be in vogue with their polite contemporaries.

I cannot forbear thinking with myself, that, if a being, endued with reason and a capacity of judging, (an inhabitant of another planet, and an utter stranger to our nature), could take a view of our actions, he would be at a loss what to imagine we were; and, had he no informer, but was to judge by our conduct, he would certainly either imagine that we were a species who were insured always to live in the world we now inhabit, or else that, after enjoying ourselves here as long as we could, we were to be insensible for ever, without the least expectation of a future judgment, punishment, or reward.

You would hardly make an apology for desiring me to write to you, if you knew how much pleasure the injunction gives.

Your's unalterably,
CLEORA.

LETTER XVII.

From Mr Locke, directed thus :

*For Anthony Collins, Esq. to be delivered to him
after my decease.*

Dear Sir,

BY my will you will see that I had some kindness for * * * *. And I know no better way to take care of him than to put him, and what I

designed for him, into your hands and management. The knowledge I have of your virtue of all kinds secures the trust which, by your permission, I have placed in you; and the peculiar love and esteem I have observed in the young man for you will dispose him to be ruled and influenced by you; so that of that I need say nothing. But there is one thing which it is necessary for me to recommend to your especial care and memory * * *.

May you live long and happy in the enjoyment of health, freedom, content and all those blessings which Providence has bestowed on you, and your virtue entitles you to. I know you loved me living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. All the use to be made of it is, that this life is a scene of vanity that soon passes away; and affords no solid satisfaction but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life.

This is what I can say upon experience, and what you will find to be true, when you come to make up the account. Adieu! I leave my best wishes with you.

JOHN LOCKE.

LETTER XVIII.

To Cleora.

August 11, 1756.

THOUGH it is but a few hours since I parted from my Cleora, yet I have already, you see, taken up my pen to write to you. You must not expect, however, in this, or in any of my future letters, that I say fine things to you, since I only in-

tend to tell you true ones. My heart is too full to be regular, and too sincere to be ceremonious. I have changed the manner, not the style, of my former conversation ; and I write to you, as I used to talk to you, without form or art. Tell me then, with the same undissembled sincerity, what effect this absence has upon your usual cheerfulness? As I will honestly confess, on my own part, that I am too interested to with a circumstance so little consistent with my repose should be altogether reconcileable to your's. I have attempted, however, to pursue your advice, and divert myself by the subject you recommended to my thoughts ; but it is impossible, I perceive, to turn off the mind at once from an object which it has long dwelt upon with pleasure. My heart, like a poor bird which is hunted from her nest, is still returning to the place of her affections, and, after some vain efforts to fly off, settles again where all its cares and all its tenderness are centered. Adieu.

L E T T E R XIX.

To Col. R——s in Spain, from his lady in England.

BEFORE this can reach the best of husbands, and the fondest lover, those tender names will be of no more concern to me. The indisposition in which you, to obey the dictates of honour and duty, left me has increased upon me ; and I am acquainted by my physicians I cannot live a week longer. At this time my spirits fail me, and it is the ardent love I have for you that carries me beyond my strength, and enables me to tell you the

most painful thing in the prospect of death is, that I must part with you: but let it be a comfort to you, I have no guilt that hangs upon me, no unrepented folly that retards me; but I pass away my last hours in reflection upon the happiness we have lived in together, and in sorrow that it is so soon to have an end. This is a frailty which, I hope, is so far from being criminal, that, methinks, there is a kind of piety in being so unwilling to be separated from a state which is the institution of Heaven, and in which we have lived according to its laws. As we know no more of the next life but that it will be an happy one to the good, and miserable to the wicked, why may we not please ourselves, at least, to alleviate the difficulty of resigning this being, in imagining that we shall have a sense of what passes below, and may, possibly, be employed in guiding the steps of those with whom we walked with innocence when mortal? Why may not I hope to go on in my usual work, and, though unknown to you, be assistant in all the conflicts of your mind? Give me leave to say to you, O best of men! that I cannot figure to myself a greater happiness than in such an employment; to be present at all the adventures to which human life is exposed; to administer slumber to thy eyelids in the agonies of a fever; to cover thy beloved face in the day of battle; to go with thee a guardian angel, incapable of wound or pain, where I have longed to attend thee when a weak, a fearful, woman. These, my dear, are the thoughts with which I warm my poor languid heart; but, indeed, I am not capable, under my present weakness, of bearing the strong agonies of mind I fall into, when I

form to myself the grief you must be in upon your first hearing of my departure. I will not dwell upon this, because your kind and generous heart will but be the more afflicted the more the person for whom you lament offers you consolation. My last breath will, if I am myself, expire in a prayer for you. I shall never see your face again. Farewell for ever.

LETTER XX.

Laura to Aurelia.

COULD your importunity have prevailed with my brother to have left me in London, you had been free from the vexation that I shall certainly give you, by making you the confidante of all my country-adventures; and I hope you will relieve my chagrin, by telling me what the dear bewitching busy world is doing, while I am idly sauntering away my time in rural shades. How happy are you, my dear Aurelia! how I envy you the enjoyment of dust, of crowds and noise, with all the polite hurry of the *beau monde*!

My brother brought me hither to see a country-seat he has lately purchased; he would fain persuade me it is finely situated, but I should think it more finely situated in the Mall, or even in Cheapside, than here. Indeed I hardly know where we are, only that it is at a dreadful distance from the theatre-royal, from the opera, from the masquerade. and every thing in this world that is worth living for. I can scarce tell you whither to direct your letters; we are certainly at the end of the earth, on the borders of the continent, the

limits of the habitable globe, under the polar star, among wild people and savages. I thought we should never have come to the end of our pilgrimage: nor could I forbear asking my brother if we were to travel by dry land to the antipodes? not a mile but seemed ten, that carried me from London, the centre of all my joys. The country is my aversion; I hate trees and hedges, steep hills and silent vallies. The satirists may laugh, but to me,

Green fields, and shady groves, and crystal springs,
And larks, and nightingales, are odious things.

I had rather hear London cries, with the rattle of coaches, than sit listening to the melancholy murmur of purling brooks, or all the mild music of the woods; the smell of violets gives me the hysterics; fresh air murders me, my constitution is not robust enough to bear it; the cooling zephyrs will fan me into a catarrh if I stay here much longer. If these are the seats of the Muses, let them unenvied enjoy their glittering whimsies, and converse with the visionary beings of their own forming. I have no fancy for dryads and fairies, nor the least prejudice to human society; a mere earthly beau with an embroidered coat suits my taste better than an airy lover with his shining tresses and rainbow wings.

The sober twilight, which has employed so many soft descriptions, is with me a very dull period: nor does the moon (on which the poets dote) with all her starry train delight me half so much as an assembly-room illuminated with wax candles; this is what I should prefer to the glaring sun in his meridian splendour. Day-light makes me sick; it has something in it so common and vulgar that

it seems fitter for peasants to make hay in, or country lasses to spin by, than for the use of people of distinction. You pity me, I know, dear Aurelia, in this deplorable state: the whole creation is a blank to me, it is all joyless and desolate. In whatever gay images the Muses have dressed these rustic abodes, I have not penetration enough to discover them. Not the flowery field nor span-gled sky, the rosy morn or balmy evening, can recreate my thoughts: I am neither a religious nor poetical enthusiast; and, without either of these qualifications, what should I do in silent retreats and pensive shades? I find myself but little at ease in this absence of the noisy diversions of the town; and it is hard for me to keep up my spirits in leisure and retirement; it makes me anxiously inquisitive what will become of me when my breath flies away. Death, that ghastly phantom, perpetually intrudes on my solitude, and some doleful knell from a neighbouring steeple often calls upon me to ruminate on coffins and funerals, graves and gloomy sepulchres. As these dismal subjects put me in the vapours, and make me start at my own shadow, the sooner I come to town the better; and I wish, my dear Aurelia, you would oblige me so far as to lay a scheme for my escape.

Adieu.

LETTER XXI.

From Polydore to Alonzo, giving an account of his accidentally meeting Aurelia, and of her falsehood to him, &c.

YOU have spent so many hours at the Earl of —'s fine seat in the country, that it is un-

necessary to describe those beautiful scenes with which you are so well acquainted. Here have I passed a great part of the summer season in a manner suitable to my contemplative humour. Having no taste for country diversions, or any kind of rural sports, my pleasures were confined to the charming shades and gardens with which the house is surrounded.

Here I enjoyed unmolested tranquillity, till a fit of curiosity led me to make an excursion into the wide champaign that opened before me from the borders of the park.

If I begin with the rosy dawn, you will pardon my romantic style, relating to the surprising adventure; but without telling a lie, the morning was yet dusky; the balmy dew and fragrant gales perfumed the air with their untainted sweets; while, with thoughts as free as the airy songsters that warble on the branches, I wander from rising hills to winding vales, through flowery lawns to leafy woods, till I found myself under the shades of a venerable row of elms, which put me in mind of Sir Roger de Coverley's rookery; the aged trees shot their heads so high, that, to one who passed under them, the crows and rooks which rested on their tops seemed to be cawing in another region. I was delighted with the noise, while, with the Spectator, I considered it as a kind of natural prayer to that Being who supplies the wants of his whole creation; my thoughts were inspired with a pleasing gratitude to the beneficent Father of the universe, till the sequel of my devotion was interrupted by the sight of a beautiful girl, about four or five years old, sitting on the grass, with a basket of

flowers in her lap, which she was sticking in the snowy fleece of a little lamb that stood by her.

I began to hope it was one of the fairy race, or some pretty phantom that haunted the grove; for the adjacent house belonging to this reverend avenue looked more like a dormitory for the dead than an habitation for the living; every thing about it appeared ruinous and desolate. I could neither hear the voice nor trace the steps of mortal man in this absolute solitude; nor had I any hopes of knowing in what wild region I was got, unless the pretty figure sitting on the grass could give me some intelligence.

I made my approaches very respectfully: but what was my surprise, in drawing near, to find the air, the complexion, every feature in miniature, of the ungrateful Aurelia, on whom I once so passionately doted! A thousand tormenting ideas rushed into my mind at the sight of this lovely creature, who smiled on me with the most enchanting innocence. Whilst I stood eagerly gazing at her, which was not long, Aurelia herself entered the walk, and confirmed the suspicion, that this child was a living proof of her infamy.

It is about six years since she eloped from the public view, regardless of her own illustrious family, or the obligations she was under to the generous Cleone, who treated her with the utmost confidence, and was the last that suspected her husband's criminal affair with her.—Be my own wrongs forgot, and all the contempt with which she treated whatever proposals honour and disinterested passion could make.

I found her now an object of pity rather than resentment; the dejection of her mind was visible

in her pale haggard looks, and the wretched negligence of her habit. I could hardly persuade myself this was the celebrated lady that once appeared in all public places with such a parade of equipage and vanity.

She was in the utmost confusion at this interview, till, excusing myself, I told her this intrusion was undesigned, and purely the effect of Chance, as I was taking a morning's ramble from the Earl of ——'s, where I had spent some time; and that she might depend upon my word not to discover her abode to any one in that family.

By this time she was a little composed, and invited me to rest myself after my walk. I followed her into the house, which looked more like the mansions of Despair than a retreat for a lady of pleasure: an awful silence reigned in every room, thro' which I made a shift to find my way, by a dim twilight that glimmered through some windows of as antique a figure as those of an old abbey. The furniture, I fancy, has not been displaced from time immemorial; it looks more like unwieldy lumber than any thing designed for use or ornament: there was nothing of a modern date but a tea-table, and that in ruinous circumstances.

It was now about ten o'clock. Aurelia ordered tea and chocolate to be brought. All her attendance was a fresh-coloured country lass, who withdrew as soon as we had breakfasted.

I was impatient to hear a relation of Aurelia's misfortunes, but durst not ask any question, for fear it would look like insulting her distress; so only renewed my excuses for interrupting her privacy.

To which she replied, that though I was the last

person in the world she would have chose to be a witness of her infamy, yet she thought herself happy in having an opportunity to make some apology for her injustice to me in refusing those terms of honour I once offered, and complying with such reproachful conditions, as had made her the most miserable creature on earth.

“ It was my criminal inclination,” continued she, “ for Cassander that made me inflexible to your entreaties, and my father’s commands to marry you. But whatever wrong this was to your merit, my guilt, with regard to the generous Cleone, is of a higher nature. The intrigue I had with her husband was attended with circumstances of the blackest treachery. I have broke through the tenderest engagements of friendship, and granted all that my dissolute lover could ask; when, finding myself with child, to hide my infamy, he brought me to this dismal place, an old mansionhouse belonging to his family, where I am cut off from human society, except two or three stupid peasants, his tenants, who reside in some part of this Gothic structure. It is now six years since I have breathed and slept (for I cannot call it living) in this melancholy confinement, without hopes of a release, being entirely dependent on Cassander’s allowance and caprice, who but too well knows his own power and my folly; which makes him, instead of the humble lover, act the imperious tyrant; his visits are seldom, his stay short, and I am left whole months to languish alone in a detested solitude.

“ This child,” continued she, weeping and taking the lovely creature in her arms, “ this child,

" which might have been my joy, proves my
 " greatest affliction. Should I die, she is immediate-
 " ly abandoned to hardship and necessity; should
 " I live, it distracts me to think she may follow
 " my scandalous example. How can I give her in-
 " structions to avoid those vices which my practice
 " approves; or recommend that virtue whose
 " sacred rules I have so openly violated? And
 " still I love this worthless man. Were I penitent,
 " could I resolve on a reformation, this leisure
 " and retirement would be a blessing and advan-
 " tage to me; but I am obstinate in guilt, while
 " I despair of happiness in this world, or the next.
 " Until I came hither, my hours were spent in
 " frolic and gaiety; a constant series of diversions
 " shortened the days, and gave wings to the jovial
 " hours, which now have leaden feet, and, burdened
 " with grief, lag heavily along. No sort of re-
 " flection gives me joy; whether I look backward
 " or forward, all is darkness and confusion: I am
 " no way qualified for retirement: books are my
 " aversion, thinking is my horror; I am weary of
 " living, and afraid to die."

I heard this account with a heart full of com-
 passion, and said what I could to persuade her to
 break off this criminal commerce with Cassander,
 and to throw herself on the care of Providence,
 and the generosity of her friends: but I had too
 much value for my own peace, and too great a
 contempt for a woman of Aurelia's character, to
 make any particular proposals for her freedom:
 and bidding her adieu, hastened back to the Earl's
 without saying one word of my adventure, which
 I commit to your secrecy, and subscribe myself,

Your most humble servant,

POLYDORE.

LETTER XXII,

A letter from Aristus, giving his friend a relation of the sudden death of his bride, who was seized in the chapel while the sacred rites were performing.

MY fate will furnish you with a full evidence of the vanity of human happiness. My last letter was wrote in the height of success, with the most arrogant expectations and boast of a lasting felicity; now it is all changed, and the shadows of night come over me.

The lovely Ermina, whom I had so long pursued, and at last persuaded to crown my wishes, the very morning she gave me her hand, before the sacred ceremony was finished, was surprised with the fatal message of death; and carried in a swoon from the chapel to her chamber, where she soon expired in her mother's arms. This hour she appeared with all the cost and splendour of a youthful bride; the next she is pale and senseless, muffled in a ghastly shroud: those charms, that in the morning promised an eternal bloom, before the evening have dropt their smiling pride; the sparkling eyes are sunk in darkness; the soft, the tuneful voice, is for ever silent; while a livid hue sits on the late rosy lips.

Thus airy Pleasure dances in our eyes,
And spreads false images in fair disguise
'T' allure our souls; till just within thy arms
The vision dies; and all the painted charms
Flee quick away from the pursuing sight,
Till they are lost in shades, and mingle with the night.

O Death! how cruel was thy triumph! Youth
and beauty, joy and blooming hope, ly here a vic-

tim to thy rage : the darksome prison of the grave must now confine the gentle captive ; instead of the pomp of a bridal-bed, the cold earth must be her lodging, dust and corruption her covering.

You will now expect I should practise the principles I have so often asserted, in exercising my boasted reason and moderation ; or leave you to insult me with the arguments I lately produced, to allay your grief under the pressure of an uncommon misfortune. This reproach would be but just at a period when Heaven has given me a full evidence of the truths I confessed, and set the vanity of human hopes in the clearest demonstration before me. One would think I should now, if ever, find it easy to moralize upon these subjects, and act the philosopher from mere necessity, if not from virtue.

Were the case your's, or any body's but my own, how many wise things should I repeat ! how fluently could I talk ! So much more easy is it to dictate than to practise. And yet I am reasonable by intervals ; I am in more than name a Christian ; in some bright periods I feel the force of that profession, and pay homage to its sacred rules : a heavenly ray scatters my grief, and cheers my soul with divine consolations : the gay and the gloomy appearances of mortal things vanish before the gleams of celestial light ; immortal pleasures, with gentle invitations, call me to the skies, and all my thoughts ascend.

But how short my triumph ! how easy the transition from reason to madness ! of what surprising variety is a human mind capable ! Light and darkness, heaven and hell, seem blended within ; it is all chaos, and wild disorder : that reason which

one moment relieves me, the next seems with a just train of ideas to torment me.

See there all pale and dead she lyes;
 For ever flow my streaming eyes:
 Fly, Hymen, with extinguish'd fires;
 Fly nuptial bliss, and chaste desires;
 Ermina's fled, the loveliest mind,
 Faith, sweetness, wit, together join'd.
 Dwelt faith, and wit, and sweetness there?
 Oh! view the change, and drop a tear.

Adieu.

LETTER XXIII.

From Mr Pope to Mr Addison.

I HAVE been lying in wait for my own imagination this week and more, and watching what thoughts came up in the whirl of fancy that were worth communicating to you in a letter. But I am at length convinced that my rambling head can produce nothing of this sort; so I must even be contented with telling you the old story, that I love you heartily. I have often found by experience, that nature and truth, though never so low and vulgar, are yet pleasing when openly and artlessly represented. It would be diverting to me to read the very letters of an infant, could it write its innocent inconsistencies and tautologies, just as it thought them. This makes me hope a letter from me will not be unwelcome to you, when I am conscious I write with more unreservedness than ever man wrote, or, perhaps, talked to another. I trust your good nature with the whole range of my follies, and really love you so well, that I would rather you should pardon me than esteem me; since one is

an act of goodness and benevolence, the other a kind of constrained deference.

You cannot wonder my thoughts are scarce consistent, when I tell you how they are distracted. Every hour of my life my mind is strangely divided; this minute perhaps I am above the stars, with a thousand systems round about me, looking forward into a vast abyss, and losing my whole comprehension in the boundless space of creation, in dialogues with Whiston and the astronomers; the next moment I am below all trifles, grovelling with T. in the very centre of nonsense: now I am recreated with the brisk sallies and quick turns of wit, which Mr Steele, in his liveliest and freest humour, darts about him; and now levelling my application to the insignificant observations and quirks of grammar of C. and D.

Good God! what an incongruous animal is man! how unsettled in his best part, his soul; and how changing and variable in his frame of body! the constancy of the one shook by every notion, the temperament of the other affected by every blast of wind! What is he altogether but one mighty inconsistency! sickness and pain is the lot of one half of him; doubt and fear the portion of the other! What a bustle we make about passing our time, when all our space is but a point? What aims and ambitions are crowded into this little instant of our life, which (as Shakespeare finely words it) is rounded with a sleep? Our whole extent of being is no more, in the eye of him who gave it, than a scarce perceptible moment of duration. Those animals, whose circle of living is limited to three or four hours, as the naturalists tell us, are yet as long-lived, and possess as wide a scene of action, as man, if we con-

sider him with a view to all space, and all eternity. Who knows what plots, what achievements, a mite may perform in his kingdom of a grain of dust, within his life of some minutes ! And of how much less consideration even than this is the life of man in the sight of God; who is for ever, and for ever ?

Who that thinks in this strain but must see the world and its contemptible grandeurs lessen before him at every thought ; it is enough to make one remain stupified in a poise of inaction, void of all desires, of all designs, of all friendships !

But we must return (through our very condition of being) to our narrow selves, and those things that affect ourselves: our passions, our interests, flow in upon us, and unphilosophize us into mere mortals. For my part, I never return so much into myself as when I think of you, whose friendship is one of the best comforts I have for the insignificancy of myself.

I am your's, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

From Miss — to her brother, to acquaint him with the death of their mother.

My dear Brother,

WHAT shall I tell you ? how will you be able to bear the fatal news of the death of our much-honoured mother, whose loss is to me more bitter than death, and will plunge you, I fear, into the deepest sorrow ? But the other night she called me to her bedside, and, taking me by the hand, said, “ My dear child, I am just going to

“ leave you ; a few hours will bear me to the
 “ world of spirits. I willingly resign you, my dear
 “ charge, and your brothers, if they are yet alive,
 “ to the care of a good God, who will always
 “ befriend the virtuous. I rejoice you are of that
 “ number : if you continue as you have set out,
 “ you cannot fail of being happy. When you
 “ have an opportunity to write to your brothers,
 “ or shall see them, tell them, I died with them on
 “ my heart, left them a mother’s blessing, and had
 “ no higher wish on earth than to hear they were
 “ wise and good. Alas ! poor Pamphilus ! would
 “ to God he was so : were I sure of this, I should
 “ die perfectly easy. I hope Ebulus will return
 “ to you, and Heaven make you happy in each
 “ other. Farewell, my dearest child ! may Hea-
 “ ven preserve you wise and good ; and when you
 “ drop a tear to the memory of a loving mother,
 “ be excited thereby to imitate whatever you
 “ thought good in her. Oh ! farewell !” With
 these words the dear woman resigned her soul into
 her Maker’s hands, and smiled in the agony of
 death. Oh ! my dear brother, grief overwhelms
 me ; I can add no more, but that I long exceed-
 ingly to see you ; that will be my only cordial, to
 alleviate the heavy loss of your affectionate sister,

ELIZA ROWE.

LETTER XXV.

From Mrs Rowe to the Countess of Hertford.

Madam,

WHEN I begin a friendship, it is for immor-
 tality. This confession, I own, is enough

to put you in some terror that you are never like to drop my conversation in this world, nor the next; but I hope I shall improve in the realms of light, and get a new set of thoughts to entertain you with at your arrival there, which, for the public interest, I wish may be long after I am sleeping in the dust; but, perhaps, mine will be the first joyful spirit that will welcome you to the immaterial coasts, and entertain you with one of the softest songs of Paradise at your arrival.—Mr Rollie would think these all gay chimeras and gay visions; but how much more so are all the charming scenes on earth?

As the fantastic images of night
Before the op'ning morning take their flight;
So vanish all the hopes of men: their pride,
And vain designs, the laughing skies deride.

You will think, Madam, I am resolved you shall remember your latter end, whoever forgets it. I suppose you will expect the next picture I send you will be Time, with a scythe and an hour-glass; but really those mementos of mortality are necessary to people like you in the height of greatness, and the full bloom of youth and beauty.—If I go on, you will think me in the height of the vapours, and the perfection of the spleen; but, in all the variety of my temper,

I am your Ladyship's

most humble servant,

ELIZ. ROWE.

I admire the verses you inclosed, and am surprised at the author.

LETTER XXVI.

*From Mrs Rowe to the Countess of Hertford.
Written the day before her death.*

Madam,

THIS is the last letter you will ever receive from me, the last assurance I shall give you, on earth, of a sincere and stedfast friendship; but when we meet again, I hope it will be in the heights of immortal love and ecstasy. Mine, perhaps, may be the glad spirit to congratulate your safe arrival to the happy shores. Heaven can witness how sincere my concern for your happiness is: thither I have sent my ardent wishes that you may be secured from the flattering delusions of the world; and, after your pious example has been long a blessing to mankind, may calmly resign your breath, and enter the confines of unmolested joy.—I am now taking my farewell of you here; but it is a short adieu, with full persuasion that we shall soon meet again.—But, oh! in what elevation of happiness!—in what enlargement of mind, and what perfection of every faculty!—What transporting reflections shall we make on the advantages of which we shall be eternally possessed!—"To him that loved us, and washed us in his blood," shall we ascribe immortal glory, dominion, and praise, for ever: this is all my salvation, all my hope. That name in whom the Gentiles trust, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, is now my glorious, my unfailing confidence. In his worth alone I expect to stand justified before infinite purity and justice.

How poor are my hopes, if I depended on those works, which my vanity, or the partiality of men, have called good; and which, if examined by divine purity, would prove, perhaps, but specious sins! The best actions of my life would be found defective if brought to the test of that unblemished holiness, in whose sight the heavens are not clean. Where were my hopes, but for a Redeemer's merit and atonement!—how desperate, how undone my condition!—With the utmost advantages I could boast I should step back and tremble at the thoughts of appearing before the unblemished Majesty! Oh Jesus! what harmony dwells in thy name! celestial joy and immortal life are in the sound:—let angels set to thee their golden harps, let the ransomed nations for ever magnify thee. What a dream is mortal life! what shadows are all the objects of mortal sense! All the glories of mortality (my much-beloved friend) will be nothing in your view at the awful hour of death, when you must be separated from this lower creation, and enter on the borders of the immortal world.

Something persuades me this will be the last farewell in this world; Heaven forbid it should be an everlasting parting. May that divine protection, whose care I implore, keep you steadfast in the faith of Christianity, and guide your steps in the strictest paths of virtue! Adieu, my most dear friend, until we meet in the Paradise of God.

· LETTER XXVII.

From a person in town to his brother in the country, describing a public execution at Tyburn.

Dear Brother,

I HAVE this day been satisfying a curiosity, I believe, natural to most people, by seeing an execution at Tyburn. This sight has had an extraordinary effect upon me, which is more owing to the unexpected oddness of the scene than the affecting concern, which is unavoidable in a thinking person at a spectacle so awful, and so interesting, to all who consider themselves of the same species with the unhappy sufferers.

That I might the better view the prisoners, and escape the pressure of the mob, which is prodigious, nay, almost incredible, if we consider the frequency of these executions in London, which is once a-month, I mounted my horse, and accompanied the melancholy cavalcade from Newgate to the fatal tree. The criminals were five in number. I was much disappointed at the unconcern and carelessness that appeared in the faces of three of the unhappy wretches. The countenances of the other two were spread with that horror and despair which is not to be wondered at in men whose period is so near, with the terrible aggravation of its being hastened by their own voluntary indiscretion and misdeeds. The exhortation spoken by the belman from the wall of St Sepulchre's church-yard is well intended; but the noise of the officers and the mob was so great, and the silly curiosity of the people climbing into the cart to take

leave of the criminals, made such a confused noise, that I could not hear the words of the exhortation when spoken, though they are as follow:

“ All good people, pray heartily to God for these poor sinners, who are now going to their deaths, for whom this great bell doth toll.”

“ You that are condemned to die, repent with lamentable tears. Ask mercy of the Lord for the salvation of your own souls, through the merit, death, and passion, of Jesus Christ, who now sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for as many of you as penitently return unto him.”

“ *Lord have mercy upon you! Christ have mercy upon you!*”

Which last words the belman repeats three times.

All the way up Holborn the crowd was so great as, at every twenty or thirty yards, to obstruct the passage; and wine, notwithstanding a late good order against that practice, was brought the male factors, who drank greedily of it, which I think did not suit well with their deplorable circumstances. After this, the three thoughtless young men, who at first seemed not enough concerned, grew more shamefully daring and wanton; behaving themselves in a manner that would have been ridiculous in men in any circumstance whatever: they swore, laughed, and talked obscenely; and wished their wicked companions good luck, with as much assurance as if their employment had been the most lawful.

At the place of execution the scene grew still more shocking; and the clergyman who attended was more the subject of ridicule than their serious

attention. The psalm was sung amidst the curses and quarrelling of hundreds of the most abandoned and profligate of mankind; upon whom (so stupid are they to any sense of decency) all the preparations of the unhappy wretches seem to serve only for the subject of a barbarous kind of mirth, altogether inconsistent with humanity. And as soon as the poor creatures were half dead, I was much surpris'd, before such a number of peace-officers, to see the populace fall to pulling and haling the carcases with so much earnestness as to occasion several warm rencounters, and broken heads. These, I was told, were the friends of the persons executed, or such as, for the sake of tumult, chose to appear so, and some persons sent by private surgeons to obtain bodies for dissection. The contests between these were fierce and bloody, and frightful to look at; so that I made the best of my way out of the crowd, and, with some difficulty, rode back among a large number of people, who had been upon the same errand with myself. The face of every one spokè a kind of mirth, as if the spectacle they beheld had afforded pleasure instead of pain, which I am wholly unable to account for.

In other nations, common criminal executions are said to be little attended by any besides the necessary officers and the mournful friends: but here all was hurry and confusion, racket and noise, praying and oaths, swearing and singing of psalms. I am unwilling to impute this difference in our own from the practice of other nations to the cruelty of our natures, to which foreigners, however, to our dishonour, ascribe it. In most instances, let them say what they will, we are human; beyond what other nations can boast; but in this

the behaviour of my countrymen is past my accounting for ; every street and lane I passed thro' bearing rather the face of a holiday than of that sorrow which I expected to see, for the untimely deaths of five members of the community.

One of their bodies was carried to the lodging of his wife, who, not being in the way to receive it, they immediately hawked it about to every surgeon they could think of: and when none would buy it, they rubbed tar all over it, and left it in a field hardly covered with earth.

This is the best description I can give you of a scene that was no way entertaining to me, and which I shall not again take so much pains to behold. I am, dear brother, your's affectionately.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

The following letter was written by a gentlewoman to her husband, who was condemned to suffer death. The unfortunate catastrophe happened at Exeter, in the time of Oliver's usurpation. A gentleman, whose name was Penruddock, to whom the letter was written, was barbarously sentenced to die without the least appearance of justice. He asserted the illegality of his enemies' proceeding with a spirit worthy his innocence: and the night before his death his lady wrote to him this letter, which is so much admired, and is as follows.

Mrs Penruddock's last letter to her husband.

My dear Heart,

MY sad parting was so far from making me forget you, that I scarce thought upon myself

since, but wholly upon you. Those dear embraces, which I yet feel, and shall never lose, being the faithful testimonies of an indulgent husband, have charmed my soul to such a reverence of your remembrance, that, were it possible, I would with my own blood cement your dear limbs to life again; and (with reverence) think it no sin to rob heaven a little while longer of a martyr. O, my dear, you must now pardon my passion, this being my last (O fatal word!) that ever you will receive from me; and know, that until the last minute that I can imagine you alive, I will sacrifice the prayers of a Christian, and the groans of an afflicted wife. And when you are not, (which sure by sympathy I shall know), I shall with my own dissolution with you, that so we may go hand in hand to heaven. 'Tis too late to tell you what I have, or rather have not, done for you; how turned out of doors, because I came to beg mercy; the Lord lay not your blood to their charge. I would fain discourse longer with you, but dare not; passion begins to drown my reason, and will rob me of my devoir, which is all I have left to serve you. Adieu, therefore, ten thousand times, my dearest dear; and since I must never see you more, take this prayer: May your faith be so strengthened, that your constancy may continue, and then I know Heaven will receive you: whither grief and love will, in a short time, (I hope), translate,

My dear, your sad, but constant wife,
even to love your ashes when dead,

ARUNDEL PENRUDDOCK.

May the 3d, 1655, 11 o'clock at night.

P. S. Your children beg your blessing, and present their duties to you.

[I do not know that I have ever read any thing so affectionate as that line, " those dear embraces, " which I yet feel !"]

[Mr Penruddock's answer has an equal tenderness, which I shall recite also, that you may see whether the man or the woman expressed themselves the more kindly, and strive to imitate them in less circumstances of distress; for from all no couple upon earth are exempt.]

L E T T E R XXIX.

Mr Penruddock's last letter to his Lady.

Dearest, best of creatures,

I HAD taken leave of the world when I received your's; it did at once recall my fondness for life, and enable me to resign it. As I am sure I shall leave none behind me like you, which weakens my resolution to part from you; so when I reflect I am going to a place where there is none but such as you, I recover my courage. But fondness breaks in upon me; and I would not have my tears flow to-morrow, when your husband, and the father of your dear babes, is a public spectacle. Do not think meanly of me, that I give way to grief now in private, when I see my sand run so fast. I within a few hours am to leave you helpless, and exposed to the merciless and insolent, that have wrongfully put me to a shameful death, and will object that shame to my poor children. I

thank you for all your goodness to me, and will endeavour so to die, as to do nothing unworthy that virtue in which we have mutually supported each other, and for which I desire you not to repine that I am first to be rewarded: since you ever preferred me to yourself in all other things, afford me, with cheerfulness, the precedence to this.

I desire your prayers in the article of death, for my own will then be offered for you and yours.

J. PENRUDDOCK.

A few short and intelligible FORMS of MESSAGES for CARDS or BILLETS, which may be varied at pleasure, so as to serve all occasions.

M E S S A G E I.

MR and Mrs Cecil's compliments to Mr and Mrs Howard, and desire the favour of their company Wednesday next, to drink tea and spend the evening.

Monday morn.

II. Mr and Mrs Howard return their compliments to Mr and Mrs Cecil, and will certainly do themselves the pleasure to wait on them.

Monday noon.

III. Mr and Mrs Howard return their compliments. and are sorry it happens that a pre-engagement will not permit them the pleasure of waiting on Mr and Mrs Cecil, which they would otherwise readily have done.

Monday morn.

IV. Mr and Mrs Compton's compliments to Mr and Mrs Stanley; and if they are disengaged this afternoon, will take the pleasure of waiting on them.

Tuesday morn.

V. Mr and Mrs Stanley are perfectly disengaged, beg their compliments, and will be extremely glad of Mr and Mrs Compton's agreeable company.

Tuesday noon.

VI. Mr and Mrs Stanley are very sorry it so happens that they are engaged this afternoon and evening; but beg their compliments, and any other time that shall be agreeable to Mr and Mrs Compton, will be proud of the pleasure of their company.

Tuesday noon.

VII. Miss Willis sends her compliments to Miss Byron, and desires to know how she does; and if well enough to see company, and it be agreeable, will wait on her this afternoon in the coach, and give her an airing for an hour before tea.

Wednesday morn.

VIII. Miss Byron, without a compliment, is very agreeably obliged to Miss Willis, whom she would be extremely glad to see, and accepts of her kind salutary offer, an airing in the coach at the time proposed.

Wednesday morn.

IX. Miss Byron, instead of compliments, begs leave to return Miss Willis her best thanks for her very obliging card, and is extremely sorry she is not well enough to have the pleasure of her company; which, however, she hopes very soon for a full enjoyment of, and to be able to accept of her kind offer of an airing in the coach.

Wednesday noon, and not up.

X. Mrs Windham presents her compliments to Mrs Pemberton; hopes she is well, and to have the favour of her company to-morrow evening, with a small but agreeable party at friendly whist.

Thursday afternoon.

XI. Mrs Pemberton is not so well as she could wish, but much at Mrs Wyndham's service, and will endeavour to wait on her.

Thursday even.

XII. Mr Lambert's compliments wait on Miss Norris, to beg the very great favour of being her partner to-morrow evening at the assembly.

Friday morn.

XIII. Miss Norris's compliments to Mr Lambert, and she is engaged.

Friday.

XIV. Miss Norris's compliments; she is not certain of being at the assembly, and undetermined about dancing; so Mr Lambert must not absolutely depend on her for a partner.

Friday morn.

XV. Miss Wansey is sorry to trouble Miss Cooper on so trifling an occasion as how to direct to her aunt Waterland; begs her compliments, and a line of information by the bearer.

Sunday evening.

XVI. Mrs Chedworth's respects (compliments she has done with) to Miss Charlton, and, if not engaged, her company, as it will be extremely agreeable, is desired this evening at a party of quadrille, about four tables in the whole.

Monday morn.

XVII. Miss Charlton's best services; she has the pleasure of Mrs Chedworth's respectful message, and it is much against her inclination that she is obliged to say she cannot possibly wait on her, having this evening a previous engagement that cannot be dispensed with.

Tuesday morn.

XVIII. If Miss Romney be well enough, Lady Bathurst's compliments, and she proposes a visit this afternoon to Miss Arron, and will be very glad of her company; the coach is ordered exactly at four, and an airing will not be amiss.

Wednesday, eleven o'clock.

XIX. Miss Romney has the honour of Lady Bathurst's card; she begs leave to return her compliments, and is very much at her Ladyship's service, and will certainly wait on her.

Wednesday.

XX. Mrs Legg has a party at cards next Wednesday se'ennight of eight tables; she presents her compliments to Mr Strong, and desires the favour of his company.

Thursday, Dec. 5.

XXI. Mr Strong has the honour of Mrs Legg's card, thinks himself extremely obliged in being of the party, and will certainly do himself the pleasure of waiting on her.

Thursday, Dec. 5.

XXII. Mr Bedford, after the honour of dancing last night with Miss Hammond, is concerned that he is prevented waiting on her this morning, by a sudden call to town; begs his compliments may be acceptable; hopes this message will find her in perfect health, and that she took no cold.

Friday morn. eight o'clock.

*Explanation of common abbreviations or contracting
of words.*

Note, A point, or full stop, is always to be written
after a word thus abbreviated.

<i>Ans.</i> Answer	<i>Mrs.</i> Mistress
<i>A. D.</i> Anno Domini, or, the year of our Lord	<i>Mty.</i> Majesty
<i>Acct.</i> account	<i>Obj.</i> Objection
<i>Abt.</i> about	<i>Qu.</i> Question
<i>Agt.</i> against	<i>Rev.</i> Reverend
<i>B. A.</i> Bachelor of arts	<i>S. T. P.</i> Professor of, or, Doctor in divinity
<i>Bp.</i> Bishop	<i>Sr.</i> Sir
<i>B. D.</i> Bachelor in divinity	<i>St.</i> Saint
<i>Bart.</i> Baronet	<i>Sol.</i> Solution
<i>Chap.</i> Chapter	<i>wch.</i> which
<i>D. D.</i> Doctor in divinity	<i>ye.</i> the
<i>Dr.</i> Doctor	<i>yt.</i> that
<i>Esq.</i> Esquire	<i>yn.</i> then
<i>i. e.</i> id est, that is	<i>yr.</i> your
<i>Empr.</i> Emperor	<i>ym.</i> them
<i>Hon.</i> Honourable	<i>&c.</i> and
<i>Kt.</i> Knight	<i>viz.</i> videlicet, to wit, or, that is to say
<i>LL. D.</i> Doctor of laws	<i>&c.</i> et cetera, and the rest (or what follows)
<i>M. D.</i> Doctor of physic	
<i>Mr.</i> Master	

But one ought to avoid those contractions of words as much as possible, unless it be for one's own private use, and where it would be ridiculous to write them in letters at length : as, *&c.* for *and so forth*, or *the rest*, *Mr.* for *Master*, *Mrs.* for *Mistress*, &c. It argues likewise a disrespect and slighting to use contractions to your betters, and is often puzzling to others, except in such cases as above mentioned,

A Table of NUMBERS and FIGURES.

NUMBERS are usually expressed either by these seven Roman capital letters, I. V. X. L. C. D. M. which are called *numerals*, or by these ten characters, viz. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, which are called *figures*, and 0, which is a *cipher*.

Their signification.

I. One. V. Five. X. Ten. L. Fifty. C. a Hundred. D. Five Hundred. M. a Thousand.

1 One. 2 Two. 3 Three. 4 Four. 5 Five. 6 Six. 7 Seven. 8 Eight. 9 Nine. 0 Nothing.

Observe concerning the numeral letters, that if a less numeral letter be placed before a greater, it takes away from the greater so much as the lesser stands for; but, placed after a greater, it adds so much to it as the lesser stands for; as the letter V. stands for *Five*; but having I. placed before it, it takes *One* from it, and makes both stand but for *Four*; thus, IV. But I. being set after V, adds *One* to it, and makes it thus, *Six*, VI.

Take notice of these examples,

IV Four	V Five	VI Six
IX Nine	X Ten	XI Eleven
XL Forty	L Fifty	LX Sixty
XC Ninety	C Hundred	CX Hundred and Ten

Observe, concerning the characters or figures, that ciphers at the right hand of figures increase their value ten times; as 1 One, 10 Ten, 100 Hundred, 7 Seven, 7000 Seven Thousand; but at the

left hand they signify nothing at all, as 01, 001, make *One*; 002, but *Two*.—A figure at every remove from the right hand increases its value ten times, as 9 *Nine*, 98 *Ninety-eight*, 987 *Nine hundred and eighty-seven*.

Note, Numbers are sometimes expressed by small Roman letters, as i. *one*, ii. *two*, xvi. *sixteen*, lx. *sixty*, &c.

Note also, Where books, chapters, sections, and verses, are cited, the numeral letters are generally used to signify the book or chapter; and the figures to signify the sections, verses, or smaller parts: as, *Exod.* xii. 17. *Exodus*, the twelfth chapter, and the seventeenth verse. So, B. IX. Sect. 24. signifies Book the ninth, and the twenty-fourth section.

Figures are also used to express the things following, viz.

1. The order or succession of things, as, 1st, 2^d, 3^d, 4th, 10th, 39th; *first*, *second*, *third*, &c.

2. The fractions or parts of a thing, as $\frac{1}{2}$ *one half*, $\frac{1}{3}$ *one third part*, $\frac{1}{4}$ *one fourth, or quarter*, $\frac{3}{4}$ *three quarters*, $\frac{5}{8}$ *five-eighths*.

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